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THE

WORD AND WORKS

OF

GOD,

BY

JOHN GILL, D. D.

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Could Dr. Gill revisit our earth and take up a copy of this book, he would probably wonder that his Body of Divinity has shrunk so much that a third part of that work can be compressed into the compass of the present volume. He would miss some words and phrases that were of unquestioned currency in his day, such as "displiciency," "rightest," "make mention" &c. But the language generally, with every sentiment and shade of sentiment, he would recognize as his own. The changes in verbiage and punctuation are very necessary to render the work readable, and the abridgement is almost entirely of redundancies and repetitions. Not the least abatement or omission has been made intentionally in any of Dr. Gill's doctrinal views.

Among the scholars of the past century, (and "there were giants in those days,") Dr. Gill holds a high rank. The University of Aberdeen awarded him the diploma of Doctor of Divinity "on account of his knowledge of the Scriptures, of the Oriental languages, and of Jewish antiquities; of his learned defence of the Scriptures against deists and infidels, and the reputation gained by his other works." His private character was so excellent, that it has been said, "his learning and labor were exceeded only by the invariable sanctity of his life and conversation."

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INTRODUCTION.

Doctrine has an influence upon practice, especially evangelical doctrine, spiritually understood, affectionately embraced, and powerfully and feelingly experienced. Where there is not the doctrine of faith, the obedience of faith cannot be expected. Where there is not the doctrine of the Gospel, and men have not learned Christ, they live for the most part as if there was no God in the world, and give themselves up to work all sin with greediness. And on the other hand, doctrine without practice, or a mere theory and speculative knowledge of things, is of no avail. Doctrine and practice should go together; and in order both to know and do the will of God, instruction in doctrine and practice is necessary; and the one being first taught will lead on to the other. This method of instruction the Apostle Paul has pointed out in some of his Epistles, especially in that to the Ephesians; in which he first treats of Election, Predestination, Adoption, Acceptance in Christ, Redemption and Pardon of Sin, Regeneration and other doctrines of grace and of the Privileges of the Saints under the Gospel dispensation; and then enforces the several duties incumbent on them as men and Christians, respecting them in their several stations, in the church, in their families, and in the world. So the Apostle instructed Timothy, first to *teach* the wholesome words of our

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Lord Jesus, the doctrine that is according to godliness and productive of it, and then to *exhort* and press men to the duties of religion from evangelical motives and principles. And he also enjoined Titus to affirm the doctrines of the Gospel with constancy, to this end, "that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." 1 Tim. vi. 2, 3. Tit. iii. 8.

Systematic Divinity is now become very unpopular. Formulas and articles of faith, creeds, confessions, catechisms and summaries of divine truths, are greatly decried in our age; and yet, what art or science has not been reduced to a system both in ancient and modern times. Medicine, jurisprudence, and indeed every art and science is reduced to a system or body; and why should Divinity, the most noble Science, be without a system? Evangelical truths are spread and scattered about in the sacred Scriptures; and to gather them together, and dispose of them in a regular orderly method, surely must be useful, for the more clear and perspicuous understanding them, for the better retaining them in memory, and for showing the connection, harmony and agreement of them. Accordingly, we find that Christian writers, in ancient times, attempted something of this nature; as the several formulas of faith, symbols or creeds, made in the first three or four centuries of Christianity,—the *Stromata* of Clemens of Alexandria; the four books of Principles, by Origen; the divine Institutions of Lactantius; the large Catechism of Gregory Nyssene; the Theology of Gregory Nazianzen; the Exposition of the Apostles' Symbol, by Ruffinus; and the Enchiridion of Austin, with many others that followed.

Since the Reformation we have had bodies or systems

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of divinity, and confessions of faith, better digested, and drawn up with greater accuracy and consistence, which have been very serviceable to lead men into the knowledge of evangelical doctrine and confirm them in it, as well as to show the agreement and harmony of sound divines and churches in its principal parts. Even the predecessors of those who now cry out against systems, confessions and creeds, had those of their own. Arius had his creed, the Socinians have their catechism called the Racovian, and the Remonstrants have published their confession of faith. There were several bodies of Divinity published by Episcopius, Limborch, Curcellæus and others. The Jews, in imitation of the Christians, have reduced their theology to certain heads or articles of faith. Maimonides comprised their religious tenets in *thirteen* articles, and after him R. Joseph Alba reduced them to *three* classes,—the Existence of God, the Law of Moses and the Doctrine of Rewards and Punishments.

But most worthy of our example are the Scripture Compendiums or Systems of Doctrine and Duty. What a compendium or body of laws is the *Decalogue or Ten Commands*, drawn up and calculated more especially for the use of the Jews, and suited to their circumstances! a body of laws not to be equalled by the wisest legislators of Greece and Rome,—Minos, Lycurgus, Zaleucus and Numa; nor by the laws of the Twelve Roman Tables, for order and regularity, for clearness and perspicuity, for comprehensiveness and brevity. They are divided into two tables in the most perfect order; the first respecting the worship of God and the duties owing to him, and the other respecting men and the mutual duties they owe to each other. As prayer is a principal

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duty incumbent on men with respect to God, our Lord has given a very compendious directory, as to the matter of it, in what is commonly called the *Lord's Prayer;* which consists of petitions the most full, proper and pertinent, and in the most regular order.

We have a creed, made mention of in Heb. vi. 1, 2. consisting of six articles,—repentance from dead works, faith towards God, the doctrine of baptism and of laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. These have been thought to be so many articles of Christian faith; but, more properly, they are so many articles of the Jewish Creed, embraced and professed by believers under the Jewish dispensation; and the Christian Hebrews are directed to consider them as the principles of the doctrine of Christ, or rather as an introduction, and as leading on to it, and which were in some sense to be *left* and not *laid again.* They were not to stop here, but to go on to perfection, by searching into and embracing doctrines more sublime and perfect, revealed in the Gospel. At least, they were not to be any longer instructed in these articles in the manner they had been, but were to view them in a clearer manner, unattended with legal ceremonies. The principal doctrines of faith under the Jewish dispensation are reduced to a system, to be improved and perfected under the Gospel dispensation. Those articles were but few; though Gregory observes, that according to the increase of times, the knowledge of saints increased, and the nearer they were to the coming of the Saviour the more fully they perceived the mysteries of salvation. And so the articles in the formulas and symbols of the first Christians were but few,

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suitable to the times in which they lived, and as opposite to the errors then broached. But new errors that sprung up made an increase of articles necessary; otherwise the same articles of faith were believed by the ancients as by later posterity, as Aquinas concludes: "Articles of Faith have increased by succession of times, not indeed as to the substance, but as to the explanation and express profession of them; for what are explicitly and under a greater number believed by posterity, all the same were believed by the fathers before them, implicitly and under a lesser number." It is easy to observe, that the first summaries of faith recorded by the most ancient writers went no further than the doctrine of the Trinity, or what concerns the Three Divine Persons; the doctrines of the heretics of the first ages being opposed to one or the other of them; but when other heresies sprung up and other false doctrines were taught, it became necessary to add new articles, both to explain, defend, and secure truth, and to distinguish those who were found in the faith of the Gospel from those that were not.

It is strongly pleaded that articles and confessions of faith, in which men are to agree, should be expressed in the bare words of the sacred Scriptures, and that nothing should be considered as a fundamental article that is matter of controversy. As to the latter, if that was admitted, there would be scarce any article at all left us to believe; for what is there that is not controverted.

Clemens of Alexandria* says, "I do not think there is any Scripture so happy as to be contradicted by none." Though we ought to entertain the highest

* Stromat l. 1. p. 277.

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esteem for the words of Scripture, and have the greatest value for them, as being clothed with such majesty, and having such an energy in them, which the words that man's wisdom teacheth have not; yet our sense of them cannot be expressed but in words literally varying from them; and it should be settled what is meant by bare words of Scripture, whether of the original text, Hebrew and Greek, or of any translation, as English, &c. The words of a translation a man cannot be sure always express the sense of Scripture, especially in passages difficult and controverted; and the original requires us to understand Hebrew and Greek. Moreover to be obliged to express ourselves only in the words of Scripture, would be—1. To destroy all exposition and interpretation of Scripture; for without words different from, though agreeable to, the sacred Scriptures, we can never express our sense of them, nor explain them to others according to the sense we have entertained of them; and though no Scripture is of private interpretation, or a man's own interpretation, so as to be obligatory on others, yet by this means it will become of no interpretation at all, private or public, of a man's own or of others. It is indeed sometimes said that *Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture*, which in some respects is true; as when, for the better understanding of a passage of Scripture, another more clear and explicit is set unto and compared with it, which serves to throw light on it and give a clearer discernment of its true sense. But then that light, discernment and sense, cannot be expressed but in words literally different from them both. 2. It would tend to make the ministry and preaching of the word in a great

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measure useless; for then a minister of the word would have nothing else to do but to repeat or read passages of Scripture relating to any particular subject, or collect those which refer to the same subject, and deliver them without attempting any illustration of them, or making use of any reasonings from them, to explain or strengthen any point of doctrine contained in them. Surely the Apostle Paul, when he "reasoned out of the Scriptures, opening and alledging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus whom he preached was Christ," (Acts xvii. 2. 3.) must in these his reasonings, explanations and allegations, use his own words; which, though they accorded with the Scriptures, must literally vary from them out of which he reasoned, and by which he elucidated and confirmed his arguments. According to this scheme all public ministrations must be at an end, as well as all writings in defence of truth and for the confutation of errors. 3. This must in a great measure cramp, if not destroy, all religious conversation about divine things. To what purpose is it for those who fear God to meet frequently and speak often one to another about the things of God and truths of the Gospel, if they are not to make use of their own words to express their sense of these things by them? And how in this way can their Christian conferences be to mutual edification? How can they build up one another in their most holy faith? How can weaker and less experienced Christians receive any advantage from more knowing and stronger ones, if only they are to declare their sense of things in the bare words of Scripture? 4. Indeed, as Dr. Owen says,* if

* The Doctrine of the Trinity Vindicated, p. 21.

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this is the case, as it would be unlawful to speak or write otherwise than in the words of Scripture, so it would be unlawful to think or conceive in the mind any other than what the Scripture expresses. 5. In this way, the sentiments of one man in any point of religion cannot be distinguished from these of another, though diametrically opposite. An Arian cannot be known from an Athanasian, for both will say, in the words of Scripture, that Christ is the *great God*, the *true God*, and *over all God blessed forever*. But without expressing themselves in their own words, their different sentiments will not be discerned; the one holding that Christ is a created God, of a like but not of the same substance with his Father; the other, that he is equal with him, of the same nature, substance and glory. And, indeed, this seems to be the grand reason why it is urged with so much vehemence, by some, that only Scripture words and phrases should be made use of, that their erroneous tenets may not be detected and exposed; for, as a learned man has observed,* such as cavil at the formulas and plead they should be very short, and composed in the bare words of Scripture *eos aliquid monstri alere*, these nourish and cherish some monstrous notion, as the experience of all ages testifies. And sometimes such persons take detached passages of Scripture from different places, and join them together, though they have no connection and agreement with each other; and such a method, Irenæus† observes, the ancient heretics took, who made use of passages of Scripture "that their figments might not seem to be without a testimony; but passed over

* Witsius in Symbol. Exercitat. 2. a. 21. p. 21.

† Adv. Hæres. l. 1. c. 1. p. 33.

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the order and connection of the Scriptures, and loosened the parts of truth as much as in them lay. And he fitly compares such to one who should take the effigy of a king made of jewels and precious stones by a skilful artificer, and loosen and separate them, and of them make the form of a dog or a fox. 6. It does not appear that those men who are so strenuous for the use of Scripture phrases only in articles of religion, have a greater value for the Scriptures than others; nay, not so much; for if we are to form a judgment of them by their sermons and writings, one would think they read the Scriptures very little, or not at all, since they make such an infrequent use of them. We may scarcely hear a passage of Scripture quoted by them in a sermon, or produced by them in their writings; but they quote frequently Seneca, Cicero and others.

The subject of the following Work being *Theology*, or what is called *Divinity*, it may be proper to consider the signification and use of the word, and from whence it has its rise. The word *Divinitas*, from whence our word *Divinity* comes, is only used by Latin writers for Deity or Godhead; but since custom and use have long fixed the sense of the word among us, to signify, when used on this subject, a Treatise on the science of divine things, sacred truths, and Christian doctrines, taken out of the Scriptures; we need not scruple the use of it. The *Jews* seem to come nearest to us in the phrase which they use concerning it, calling it* *a Science of Divinity*, or a *divine Science;* that is, a science or doctrine concerning divine things, concerning God, concerning his divinity and things belonging to him,

* Vid. Buxtorf. Talmud. Lex. Col. 752.

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which is nearly the same in sense with the word *theology*. The Jews divide theology into two parts; the first they call the work of Bereshith or the creation; for Bereshith being the first word in Gen. i. 1. (*In the beginning God created,*) they frequently use it to signify the whole work of the creation; so that this part of their Theology respects the creatures God has made and the nature of them; whereby the invisible things of God, as the apostle says, are discerned, even his eternal power and Godhead; and this is their *physics* or *natural Theology*. The other branch is called the *work of the chariot*,* which appellation is taken from the vision in Ezek. i. of the four living creatures in the form of a chariot. This is the more abstruse and mysterious part of their Theology; and may be called their *metaphysics* or *supernatural Theology;* treating of God and of his divine attributes, of the Messiah, of angels and the souls of men; as in the Book of Zohar and other cabalistic writings.

Theology is a Greek word, and signifies a discourse concerning God and things belonging to him. It was first in use among the heathen poets and philosophers, and hence the word *Theologue*. Lantantius says,† the most ancient writers of Greece were called *Theologues;* poets, who wrote of their deities, of whom Pherecydes is said to have been the first; though some make Muscus, the son of Eumolphus, the first, and others give the title to Orpheus. The Egyptians had their Theology,‡ which they communicated to Darius the father of Xerxes; and so had the Magi and the Chaldeans; of whom Democritus is said to learn Theology and Astrology.§

* Vid. Maimon. præfat. ad More Nevochim, par 1.

† De Ira c. 11. ‡ Diodorus Sic. l. 1. p. 85.

§ Laert. l. 9. in vita ejus.

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The priests of Delphos are called by Plutarch* the *Theologues* of Delphos. These words, *theology* and *theologues*, have been made use of by Christian writers without impropriety more than of other words which come from the same source; for though these words are used of false deities, and of persons that treat of them, it follows not but they may be used, and with great propriety, of discourses concerning the true God, and things belonging to him, and of those who discourse of them. The first among Christians who has the title of *Theologue*, or *Divine*, is St. John, the writer of the book of the Revelation. The words *theologue* and *theology* are to be met with frequently in the ancient fathers, and in all Christian writers to the present times.

Theology may be considered either as *natural*, which is from the light of nature, and is attained unto through the use and exercise of it, or *supernatural*, which is through divine revelation.

Natural Theology may be considered both as it was in Adam before the fall, and as in him and his posterity since the fall. Adam, before the fall, had great knowledge of things, divine as well as natural, moral, and civil. He was created in the image of God, which image lay in knowledge, as well as in righteousness and holiness. Before he came short of this glory, and lost this image, or greatly impaired it by sin, he knew much of God, of his nature and attributes, of his mind and will, and the worship of him; he had knowledge of the persons in God, of a Trinity of persons who were concerned in the creation of all things. Without this true knowledge of God he could not have yielded the wor-

* De defect. Orac. v. 417. vid. ib. 410 436.

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ship due to each divine person. This knowledge, though not entirely innate, or sprung from the light of nature within himself, was capable of being increased by things without, as by symbols,—the tree of life in the midst of the garden, &c.; by positive precepts,—as the prohibition to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the institution of marriage, &c.; and through a constant and dili gent contemplation of the works of creation. Nor can we suppose him to be altogether without the benefit and advantage of divine revelation; since he had such a near and immediate intercourse and converse with God himself.

But this kind of Theology appeared with a different aspect in Adam after his fall, and in his posterity. By sin his mind was greatly beclouded, and his understanding darkened. He lost much of his knowledge of God, and of his perfections, or he could never have imagined that going among the trees of the garden would hide him from the presence of God, and secure him from his justice. What a notion must he have of the omnipresence and omniscience of God when he attempted to palliate and cover his sin by the excuse he made? He lost his familiar intercourse with God, and communion with him, and his posterity appear to be in the same case and circumstances; without God in the world, without any true knowledge of him or fellowship with him. They appear to be in the image of the earthly and sinful Adam, and not to have the image of God upon them; they are alienated from the life of God, and their understaning darkened as to the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; and though there are some remains of the light of nature in them, by which

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they may learn something of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, by considering the works of creation, yet they are without a practical knowledge of him. They glorify him not as God, and serve the creature more than the Creator. What knowledge they have of God is very dim and obscure. They are like persons in the dark, who grope about, if happily they may feel after him, and find him. What ridiculous notions have they entertained of Deity? what gods have they feigned for themselves? Being destitute of a divine revelation, they can have no assurance that God will pardon sin, nor any knowledge of his way of justifying sinners by the righteousness of his Son. There is no saving knowledge of God without Christ; wherefore the light of nature is sufficient to salvation; and though men may by its means know in some instances what is displeasing to God, and what agreeable to him; what to be avoided, and what to be performed; yet even in the things they do know they do not in their practice answer to their knowledge. And did they, they could not be saved thereby; for if by obedience to the law of Moses none are justified and saved, then certainly not by obedience to the law and light of nature. None can be saved without faith in Christ and his righteousness. There is no pardon but by his blood; nor acceptance with God but through him.

Supernatural Theology may be considered as it was from its first appearance after the fall of Adam to the flood. Its foundation is what God pronounced to the serpent: *It* (the seed of the woman) *shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* These words contain the principal articles of Christian Theology; a

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the incarnation of the Messiah, the Saviour of men; who should be *the seed of the woman*, made of a woman, made flesh, and become a partaker of the flesh and blood of those he was to save. This seems to have been understood by our first parents. Hence it is thought that Eve imagined that this illustrious person was born of her, when she brought forth her first-born, saying, *I have gotten a man the Lord*, as some choose to render the word. According to the Cabalists,* Enos, the son of Seth, afterwards was expected to be the Redeemer of the world, and therefore was called *Enos*, *the man*, the famous excellent man. These words also teach the sufferings and death of Christ in the human nature, by means of the serpent Satan. Satan being trod upon would, like a serpent, turn and bite his heel; wound him in his human, inferior nature, called his heel, and so bring him to the dust of death; when the Messiah, by his sufferings and death, would *bruise* his *head*, confound his schemes, destroy his works, yea, destroy him who had the power of death; abolish death and make an end of sin, the cause of it, by giving full satisfaction for it; and so save and deliver his people from all its sad effects,—eternal wrath, ruin and damnation.

This Theology received some further improvement from the coats of skin the Lord God made and clothed our first parents with, an emblem of the justifying righteousness of Christ, and of the garments of salvation wrought out by his obedience, sufferings and death; signified by slain beasts; and which God puts upon his people, and clothes them with, through

* Reuchlin, Cabalæ. l. 1. p. 740

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his gracious act of imputation; and hence they are said to be *justified by blood.* To this may be added the hieroglyphic of the cherubim and flaming sword, placed at the end of the garden, to observe or point at the tree of life; representing the prophets of the Old and the apostles and ministers of the New Testament, being placed and appointed to show unto men the way of salvation by Christ the tree of life. And what serves to throw more light on this evangelical Theology, are the sacrifices ordered to be offered up; particularly that by Abel, who, *by faith* in the sacrifice of Christ, *offered up a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;* which also was a lamb, the firstling of his flock, and pointed at the Lamb of God, who by his sacrifice takes away the sins of his people. Within this period of time men seem to have increased in light, as to the worship of God, especially public worship; for in the times of Enos, the grandson of Adam, men *began to call upon the name of the Lord.* Prayer to God, and invocation of his name, were, no doubt, used before; but men increasing, and families becoming more numerous, they now met and joined together in carrying on social and public worship, though there were corruptions in practice, within this period of time. Wicked Cain, whose works were evil, set a bad example to his posterity, and he and they lived together, separate from the posterity of Seth, indulging themselves in the gratification of sinful pleasures. And it is said, that in the times of Jared, some descended from the holy mountain, as it is called, to the company of Cain, in the valley, and mixed themselves with them, and took of their daughters for wives; from whence sprung a race of giants and wicked men who were the cause of the flood. Lamech gave into

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the practice of bigamy; and Pseudo-Berosus says,* that Ham lived a very vicious and profligate life before the flood; yet there does not appear to have been any corruption in doctrine and worship, or any idolatry exercised. Some, indeed, have pretended† that in the days of Enos images were invented, to excite the minds of creatures to pray to God by them as mediators; but this is said without any foundation.

The next period of time in which supernatural Theology may be traced is from the flood, in the times of Noah, to the giving of the law to Israel, in the times of Moses. Noah was instructed by his father Lamech, and it was taught by Noah, and the knowledge of it conveyed to his posterity, partly in the ministry of the word by him; for he was a *preacher of righteousness*, even of evangelical righteousness, *of the righteousness of faith;* and partly by the sacrifices he offered, which were typical of Christ's sacrifice for sin. Moreover, the waters of the flood, and the ark in which Noah and his family were preserved, were a type of an evangelical ordinance, that of baptism, which is an emblem of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, by which men are saved. For Noah and his family in the ark, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up below, and the windows of heaven opened above, were like persons covered in water and immersed in it, and as persons buried. And when they came out of the ark, the water being carried off, it was like a resurrection, and as life from the dead. The *like figure*, or antitype *whereunto*, the Apostle says, *even baptism, doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ* signified thereby,

* Antiq. l 3. p 25.
† Juchasin, fol. 134. 2 Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 74. 2.

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(1 Pet. iii. 21.) The rainbow, the token of the covenant, though not of grace, yet of kindness and preservation, was an emblem of peace and reconciliation by Christ, the Mediator of the covenant of grace; and may assure of the everlasting love of God to his people, and of the immoveableness of the covenant of his peace with them, (Isa. liv. 9, 10.) In the line of Shem, the son of Noah, the knowledge of this kind of Theology was continued. Noah's blessing of him is thought by the Cabalists* to contain his earnest desire that he might be the Redeemer of men. However, God was the Lord of Shem, known, owned and professed by him, and Shem was the father of all the children of Eber. According to the Jews† Shem had a divinity-school, where the sons of Japhet, becoming proselytes, dwelt; and which continued to the times of Isaac; for he is reported to go thither to pray for Rebecca.‡ Eber also, according to them, had such a school, where Jacob§ was a minister, servant or disciple; and so had Abraham in the land of Canaan, and his three hundred trained servants are supposed to have been his catechumens. In Haran, also, Abraham, it is said,‖ taught and proselyted the men, and Sarah the women. However, this we are sure of, that he instructed and "commanded his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment," (Gen. xviii 19.) As the Gospel was preached unto Abraham, (Gal. iii. 8.) there is no doubt but that he preached it to others; and he had know-

* Reuchlin. ut supra.

† Targum Jon. in Gen. ix. 27.

‡ Targ. Jerus. et Jon in Gen xxv. 22.

§ Targ. Onk. et Jon. in Gen. xxv. 27.

‖ Bereshit Rabba, s. 39. fol. 35. 1.

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ledge of the Messiah, who should spring from him, in whom all nations of the earth would be blessed. His grandson Jacob had a more clear and distinct view of him, as God's salvation, as the Shiloh, the peace-maker and prosperous one, who should come before civil government was removed from the Jews, (Gen. xlix. 10—18.) Idolatry within this period first began among the builders of Babel; some think in the days of Serug* It was embraced by the Zabians in Chaldea, and obtained in the family of Terah, the father of Abraham. The worship of the sun and moon prevailed in Arabia in the times of Job, who lived at the time the children of Israel were in Egypt, and a little before their coming out, who do not appear to have given in to the idolatry of the Egyptians. Job and his three friends, it is plain, had great knowledge of God and divine things; of the perfections of God; of the impurity of human nature; of the insufficiency of man's righteousness to justify him before God; and of the doctrine of Redemption and salvation by Christ, (Job xiv. 4. and xxv. 4, 5. and xix. 25, 26. and xxxiii. 23, 24.)

The next period is from the giving of the law to Israel, by the hand of Moses, to the times of David and the prophets, in which supernatural Theology was taught by types; as the passover, the manna, the brazen serpent, &c. which were emblems of Christ and his grace, and of salvation by him. The sacrifices instituted, particularly the daily sacrifice morning and evening, and the annual sacrifices on the day of atonement, were typical of and led the faith of men to the expiation of sins, to be made by the sacrifice of Christ. The whole ceremo-

* Suidas in voce Abram et in voce Scridg.

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nial law, relating to the priests, their garments, their work and office, had an evangelical signification. It was the Jews' Gospel which led them to Christ, and to an acquaintance with the things of Christ. Moses wrote of Christ, of his prophetic, priestly and kingly offices, either by type or prophecy. The song of Moses in Deut. xxxii. and of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. very clearly speak of the perfections of God, of his works of providence and grace, and of the Messiah. According to the Jews, there was a divinity-school in the times of Samuel. Naioth in Ramah is interpreted* an house of doctrine, or school of instruction, of which Samuel was president, standing over the prophets teaching and instructing them, (1 Sam. xix. 18, 19.) Such schools there were in after times, at Bethel, Jericho and Gilgal; in the times of Elija and Elisha, where the sons or disciples of the prophets were trained up in the knowledge of divine things, (2 Kings ii. 3, 5. and iv. 38.) In such a college or house of instruction Huldah, the prophetess, dwelt at Jerusalem, (2 Kings xxii. 14.) There were within this time some checks to the true knowledge and worship of God, by the idolatry of the calf at Sinai, of Baal-peor on the borders of Moab, of Baalim and Ashtaroth and other deities

The period from and including the times of David to the Babylonish captivity, abounds with evangelical truths and doctrines of supernatural theology. The Psalms of David are full of supernatural and evangelical knowledge, giving many intimations of the sufferings and death of Christ, of his burial, resurrection to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, on which many blessings of grace depend, which could never have been

* Targum in 1 Sam. xix. 19. 20.

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known but by divine revelation. And the prophets who followed him spoke still more clearly of the incarnation of Christ; pointed out the very place where he would be born, and the country where he would preach the Gospel to the illumination of those who sat in darkness. Indeed a scheme of evangelical truths may be deduced from the prophetic writings. There were some sad revolts from the true God, and his worship, within this time; as the idolatry of the calves in the reign of Jeroboam and others of the kings of Israel, and the idolatries committed in the times of Ahaz, Manassah and Amon, kings of Judah which issued in the captivities of both people.

The period from the Babylonish captivity to the times of Christ, finishes the Old Testament dispensation. At the return of the Jews from captivity, who brought no idolatrous worship with them, there was a reformation made by Ezra and Nehemiah, with the prophets who lived in their time, or soon after, as Haggai, Zacharia and Malachi. They all prophesied of Christ the Saviour, and of the salvation that should come by him, and spoke of his near approach. But after the death of these prophets prophecy ceased, supernatural Theology began greatly to decline, the truths of revelation were neglected and despised, and the doctrines and traditions of men were preferred to the word of God, which was made of none effect by them. The sect of the Sadducees, a sort of free-thinkers, rose up; who said there was no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit. And there arose the sect of the Pharisees, a sort of free-willers, who set up as the rule of mens' worship, traditions, which rose to great magnitude in the times of Christ, who severely inveighed

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against them; and which in after times were compiled in a volume called the *Misnah*, their *Traditional* or Body of Traditions. This, in course of time, occasioned a large work finished in Babylon, and from thence called the *Babylonian Talmud*, which is their *Doctrinal*, or Body of Doctrine; full of fables, false glosses and interpretations of Scriptures, and is the foundation of the erroneous doctrines and practices of the Jews to this day. The interpretation of the vision in Zech. v. 6—11. given by George Eliezer Edzard,* will be found ingenious and interesting. This learned man observes that the preceding vision of the *flying roll*, describes the sad corruption of manners among the Jews, in the three or four former ages of the second temple; doctrine remaining pretty sound among them; which corruption of manners was punished by the incursions of the Lagidæ and Seleucidæ, kings of Egypt and Syria, into Judea, as the vision represents. The following vision of a woman sitting in an Ephah, and shut up in it, and then transported by two other women into the land of Shinah, he thus interprets: By the *woman*, who, by way of eminence is called *wickedness*, is to be understood the impious and false doctrine devised by the Pharisees and Sadducees, and other corrupt doctors of the Jews in the latter times of the second temple, and handed down to posterity. It is compared to a woman because it had nothing manly, nothing solid in it; and, moreover, caused its followers to commit spiritual fornication. It is called *wickedness* because the principal articles of faith, concerning the mystery of the Trinity, the Deity of the Son of God and of the Holy Spirit, the person

* Præfat. ad Annotat. in Tract. Beracot.

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and office of the Messiah, were sadly defiled by it; and in their room were substituted traditions, precepts and inventions of men. No greater impiety can be thought of than this, which issued in the rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah, in the persecution of the preachers of the Gospel, and in the hindering of its progress. The Ephah designs the people of the Jews throughout Judea, Samaria and Galilee. In the Ephah, a dry measure, wheat and such things were measured, the food of the body being a proper type of the heavenly doctrine, the food of the soul. By the emptiness of the Ephah it is intimated that sound doctrine, about the time of the Messiah's coming, would be banished out of Judea and the neighboring parts, and that most of the inhabitants thereof would be destitute of the knowledge of the pure faith. The wicked woman *sitting*, not lying prostate, but sitting *in the midst of the Ephah*, and filling, not a corner of it, but the whole, denotes the total corruption of doctrine, its power and prevalence; obtaining in all places, synagogues, schools, seats and pulpits, and among all classes; the few being crushed who professed the sound doctrine of the Trinity, and of the person and office of the Messiah. And whereas a *talent of lead* was seen *lifted up;* this signifies the divine decree concerning the destruction of the Jews and their polity by the Romans; which should be most surely executed on them, for their corruption of doctrine, and for sins that flowed from thence. The *lifting* up of the talent not only prefigured the near approach of the judgment, but the setting of it before the eyes of the people, to be beheld through the ministry of Christ and his apostles before it was executed; that some, while there was hope,

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might be brought to repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the true Messiah. The talent was *cast into the ephah*, and upon the woman in it,—signifying the destruction of the Jews; the angel that talked with Zachariah the prophet, and who was no other than the Son of God, being the principal author, and Vespasian and the Roman army under him being only ministers and instruments. Not that hereby the corrupt doctrine was wholly extinguished; but it was depressed, and weakened, and reduced, and was among a few only, great numbers of its doctors and disciples being slain and exiled, its temple and city burnt, and its schools throughout Judea destroyed. But in process of time the Jews restored some schools in Palestine; as at Jabneh, Zippore, Cæsarea and Tiberias; in the last of which R. Judah Hakkadosh compiled the *Misnah*, about *A. D.* 150, and the *Jerusalem Talmud*, *A. D.* 230. After the death of this Rabbi, his chief disciples went into Babylon and carried with them the greatest part of the doctors and their scholars out of Palestine; and that doctrine gradually disappeared in Judea. About the year 340 R. Hillell, the last of those doctors in the land of Israel, died. Schools continued in Babylon for many ages; and this is what is meant in the last part of the symbolic vision of Zacariah, by the Ephah being carried by two women into the land of Shinar, that is, Babylon. By these *two women* are meant the Misnic and Gemaristic doctors; the two heads of which were Raf and Samuel, who went to Babylon a little after the death of R. Judah, the saint. These are said to have *wings like storks*, fit for long journeys, to fly with on high, and with swiftness, into remote parts; fitly describing the persons transport

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ing their false doctrine into the remote parts of Babylon, far from Palestine; carrying great numbers from thence, and with much celerity. *The wind* being *in their wings*, denotes the cheerfulness with which the Jewish Rabbins pursued their studies till they had finished their design, the Talmud, which they could not perfect without the impulse and help of an evil spirit, signified by the wind. In Babylon they *built a house* for their false doctrine, erected various schools, and so it was *established* and *set on its own base*, and continued for 820 years or more. This extraordinary commentary is instructive as to the corruption of doctrine among the Jews.

Supernatural theology, or divinity, is thus traced to the times of Christ. Let us glance back at paganism. Idolatry began to appear at, or a little after, the building of Babel, and the dispersion of the people. The first objects of it seem to have been the sun and moon. This idolatry certainly obtained in the times of Job. Then kings and heroes, were deified after death; which at length issued in a multiplicity of gods throughout the several nations of the earth. What truth remained was disguised with fables; or, to use the apostle's phrase, they *changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator*, their foolish hearts being darkened. The theology of the Pagans, according to themselves, as Scævola* and Varro,† was of three sorts: 1. Mystic, or Fabulous, which belonged to the poets and was sung by them. 2. Physic, or Natural, which belonged to the philosophers and was studied by them. 3. Politic, or Civil, which

* Apud. Augustin. de Civ. Dei, l. 4. c. 27.

† Apud. Ib. l. 6. c. 5.

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belonged to princes, priests and people; being instituted by the one, exercised by the second, and enjoined upon the people. The *first* called Fabulous, treated of the theogony and genealogy of their deities; in which things unworthy of deity are ascribed to them,—as thefts, murders, adulteries, and all manner of crimes; and hence this kind of theology is condemned by the wiser of heathens as nugatory and scandalous. The writers of this theology were Sanchoniatho, the Phœnician; and of the Grecians, Orpheus, Hesiod, Pherecydes, &c. The *second*, called Physic or Natural, was studied and taught by the philosophers, who, rejecting the multiplicity of gods introduced by the poets, brought their theology to a more natural and rational form. They supposed that there was but one supreme God, which they commonly make to be the sun, or make the sun his emblem. They devised certain demons which they considered as mediators between the supreme God, who was at too great a distance to mind the affairs of the world and man; and the doctrines of these demons to which the apostle is thought to allude in 1 Tim. iv 1. were the themes of the philosophers who treat of their nature and office; as did Thales, Pythagoras, Plato and the Stoics. The *third* part, called Politic, or Civil, was instituted by legislators, statesmen and politicians. The first among the Romans was Numa Pompilius. It chiefly related to their gods, temples and rites of worship, the care of which belonged to the priests. It was enjoined upon the common people to keep them in obedience to the civil state. Thus things continued in the Gentile world, until the light of the Gospel was sent among them. The times before that were *times of ignorance*, as the apostle calls

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them,—ignorance of the true God, his worship of the Messiah, and his salvation.

Supernatural theology at the coming of Christ revived, and appeared in all its purity, splendor and glory. John was a man sent from God to bear witness to the light that was just rising, even the Sun of righteousness; the Dayspring from on high; the great Light that should lighten those that sat in darkness with a supernatural light. He declared the kingdom of heaven, or Gospel dispensation, was at hand, and just ushering in. He preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin, and administered that Gospel ordinance. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, had spoke to the fathers by the prophets, now spoke to men by his Son." Christ his only begotten Son, who lay in his bosom, came and declared him; who and what he was, and what was his mind and will. He brought the doctrines of grace and truth with him, and spoke as never man spoke. His doctrine was not human, but divine. It was not his own as man, but he received it from his Father, and delivered it to his apostles; who, having a commission from him to preach it, and being qualified for it with the gifts and graces of his Spirit in great abundance, went into all the world and preached the Gospel to every creature. They had the deep things of God revealed unto them; things which could never have been discovered by the light of nature; things not revealed in the law of Moses; things "which eye had not seen nor ear heard, nor ever entered into the heart of man;" and which the reason of men could never have descried. "They spoke the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained

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before the world unto our glory." In the books of the New Testament are written, as with a sunbeam, those truths of pure revelation, the doctrines of a Trinity of divine persons in the Godhead; the eternal Sonship, distinct personality and Deity of Christ, and his several offices as Mediator; the distinct personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, and his operations of grace upon the souls of men; the everlasting and unchangeable love of the Three divine Persons to the elect; the predestination of the elect to the adoption of children; eternal election in Christ to grace and glory; the covenant of grace in Christ and its blessings; redemption by Christ, full pardon of sin through his blood, free justification from sin by his righteousness, and plenary satisfaction for it by his atoning sacrifice; regeneration, or the new birth; effectual calling; conversion and sanctification by the efficacious grace of the Spirit; the saints' final perseverance in grace to glory; the resurrection from the dead, and a future state of immortal life and happiness,—all which are brought to light by the Gospel of Christ. These are the sum and substance of supernatural theology.

While the apostles, and other ministers of the word raised up in their times, continued, these doctrines were held forth with great clearness and perspicuity; but, as the historian says,* after the holy company of the apostles had ended their lives, and that generation was gone, then a system of impious error came in through the deceit of false teachers; and false doctrine was attempted to be introduced in opposition to the truth of the Gospel. The doctrines of divine revelation which Satan, by his

* Egesippus apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 32.

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emissaries, set himself against to undermine and destroy, were the doctrines of the Trinity; the Incarnation of Christ of a virgin; his proper Deity by some, and his real Humanity by others; his eternal Sonship, or his being begotten of the Father before all worlds. The school at Alexandria, from whence came several of the Christian doctors, as Pantænus, Clemens, Origen, &c. served very much to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel; for though it mended the Platonic philosophy, it marred the Christian doctrine and laid the foundation for Arianism and Pelagianism, which in aftertimes so greatly disturbed the church of God. As many of the fathers of the Christian church were originally Pagans, they were better skilled in demolishing Paganism than in building up Christianity; and, indeed, they set themselves more to destroy the one than to illustrate and confirm the other. There was a purity in their lives, but a want of clearness, accuracy and consistence in their doctrines. It would be endless to relate how Christian doctrine was obscured by the heretics that rose up in the latter part of the first and second centuries —by Sabellians, Photinians, Samosatenians, Arians, Eutychians, Nestorians, Macedonians, Pelagians, &c. God was pleased to raise up, however, instruments to stop their progress and preserve the truth,—as Athanasius against the Arians, and Austin against the Pelagians. The Gospel in its simplicity, through the power of divine grace attending it, made its way into the Gentile world, in these first centuries, with great success, while Paganism decreased before it, and in the times of Constantine received a fatal blow in the Roman empire. Yet by degrees Pagan rites and ceremonies were introduced

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into the Christian church; and with errors in doctrine, and other things concurring, made way for the man of sin to appear; and for that mystery of iniquity, which had been secretly working from the times of the apostles, to show its head openly. And the darkness of Popery came upon almost all that bore the Christian name.

In the twelft, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, flourished a set of men called *Schoolmen*, who framed a new sort of divinity, called from them *Scholastic Theology*. The first founder, according to some, was Damascene, among the Greeks, and by others Lafranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, among the Latins; but generally Peter Lombard is reckoned the father of these men. He was followed by our countryman Alexander Hales, and after him were Albertus Magnus, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Durandus and others. Their divinity was founded upon and confirmed by the philosophy of Aristotle,—misunderstood, misinterpreted. As they could not read Aristotle in his own language, the Greek, they were indebted to the Arabic interpreters who misled them. Their theology lay in contentious and litigious disputations; in thorny questions and subtle distinctions; and their whole scheme was chiefly directed to support antichristianism and its tenets; so that by their means popish darkness was increased, and Christian divinity, almost banished from the world, was only to be found among a few,—as the Waldenses and Albigenses, and the inhabitants of the valleys of Piedmonte, and some scattered persons and their followers—as Wickliffe, John Huss and Jerome of Prague. So things continued till the reformation begun by Zuinglius and Luther, and carried on by others; by whose means

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evangelical light was spread through many nations in Europe; the doctrines of the apostles were revived, and supernatural theology once more lifted up its head. The reformed churches then published their confessions of faith, and many eminent men wrote systems of divinity; in which they all agreed in the main, to support the doctrines of revelation,—as of the Trinity, and the Deity of the divine persons in it, those of predestination and eternal election in Christ, of redemption by him, pardon of sin by his blood, and justification by his righteousness.

But Satan, who envied the increasing light of the Gospel, soon began to bestir himself, and to play his old game which he had done with so much success in the first ages of Christianity. Having been for a long time otherwise engaged, to nurse up the man of sin, and to bring him to the height of his impiety and tyrrany, and to support him in it; now as his kingdom was like to be shook, if not subverted, by the doctrines of the Reformation, he went to his old work again,—revived the Sabellian and Photinian errors, by the Socinians in Poland; and the Pelagian errors, by the Arminians and Remonstrants in Holland,—the pernicious influence of which has been spread in other countries; and, indeed, has drawn a veil over the glory of the Reformation. The doctrines of pure revelation have been hidden and some are endeavoring to bring us into a state of somewhat refined paganism. Almost all the old heresies have been revived, under a fond and foolish notion of new light, when they are no other than what have been confuted over and over. They are the devises of Satan, with which he has deceived men once and again.

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and when men leave the sure word, the only rule of faith and practice, and follow their own fancies, and the dictates of their carnal minds, they must needs go wrong, and fall into labarynths, out of which they cannot find their way: "to the law, and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Let us therefore search the Scriptures, to see whether doctrines advanced are according to them or not.

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THE WORD AND WORKS OF GOD.

PART I.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD, HIS WORD, NAMES, NATURE, PERFECTIONS AND PERSONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEING OF GOD.

THE Being of God is the foundation of all religion; for if there is no God, religion is a vain thing; and it matters not what we believe nor what we do, if there is no superior Being to whom we are accountable for faith and practice. Because the being of God is a first principle which is not to be disputed; and because it is a self-evident proposition not to be disproved, some have thought it should not be admitted as a matter of debate.* But such is the malice of Satan, to suggest the contrary to the minds of men, such the badness of some wicked men to listen to and imbibe it, and such the weakness of some good men to be harrassed and distressed with doubts, that it cannot, be improper to endeavor to fortify our minds with reasons and arguments.

1. There has been a general belief and consent among men of all nations, in all ages of the world, which it is

* So Aristotle says, every problem and proposition is not to be disputed; they that doubt whether God is to be worshipped, and parents loved, are to be punished, and not disputed with. Topic. l. 1. c. 9.

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not reasonable tc suppose would have obtained if untrue. This has been observed by many heathen writers themselves. Aristotle says,* all men have a persuasion of Deity, or that there is a God. Cicero observes,† "There is no nation so wild and savage, whose minds are not imbued with the opinion of the gods; many entertain wrong notions of them, but all suppose and own the divine power and nature." And in another place‡ he says, "There is no animal besides man that has any knowledge of God; and of men there is no nation so untractable and fierce, although it may be ignorant what a God it should have, yet is not ignorant that one should be." And again,§ "It is the sense of all mankind, that it is *innate* in all, and is, as it were, engraven on the mind, that there is a God. As to what he is they differ, but that he is none deny." And to the same sense are the words‖ of Seneca, "There never was a nation so dissolute and abandoned, so lawless and immoral, as to believe there is no God." So Ælianus¶ relates, "None of the barbarous nations ever fell into atheism, or doubted of the gods whether they were or no, or whether they took care of human affairs or not; not the Indians, nor the Gauls, nor the Egyptians." And Plutarch** has these remarkable words, "If you go over the earth," says he, "you may find cities without walls, letters, kings, houses, wealth and money, devoid of

* De Cœlo, l. 1. c. 3.
† Tusculan. Quæst. l. 1. c. 13.
‡ De Legibus, l. 1.
§ De Natura, Deorum, l. 2.
‖ Ep, 117.
¶ Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 31. So Plato de Legibus, l. 10. p. 945.
** Adv. Colotem. Vol II. p. 1125.

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theatres and schools; but a city without temples and gods, and where is no use of prayers, oaths and oracles, nor sacrifices to obtain good or avert evil, no man ever saw." These things were observed and said when the true knowledge of God was in a great measure lost, and idolatry prevailed; and yet, even then, this was the general sense of mankind. In the first ages of the world men universally believed in the true God, and worshipped him. Until some time after the flood there appears no trace of idolatry. The sins with which the world was filled seem to have been lewdness and uncleanness, rapine and violence. Some think the tower of Babel was built for an idolatrous use, and it may have been that about that time idolatry was set up, as it is thought to have prevailed in the days of Serug. It is very probable that when the greater part of the posterity of Noah's sons were dispersed throughout the earth, and settled in distant parts of it; remote as they were from those among whom the true worship of God was preserved, they, by deegrees, lost sight of the true God and forsook his worship. The sun, moon and the host of heaven seem to have been the first objects of idolatry. Job plainly refers to it, chap. xxxi. 26, 27. And, indeed, when men had cast off the true object of worship, what could have been more natural to substitute in his room than the sun, moon and stars, so glorious in themselves, and so beneficial to the earth? Hence the people of Israel were exhorted to take care that their eyes were not ensnared at the sight of them, to fall down and worship them; which in after-times they did, (Deut. iv. 19. 2 Kings xxi. 3.) It appears also that men took very early to the deifying of their heroes after death,—such

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were the Bel, or Belus, of the Babylonians, the Baal-peor of the Moabites, the Moloch of the Phœnicians, and other Baalim lords or kings mentioned in the Scriptures, —and such were Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Hercules, and the rest of the rabble of the heathen deities; and, indeed, their Lares and Penates, or household gods, were no other than the images of their deceased parents, or more remote ancestors, whose memory they revered. In process of time their deities became very numerous; they had gods many and lords many,—even with the Jews, when fallen into idolatry, their gods were according to the number of their cities, (Jer. ii. 28.) And as for the Gentiles, they worshipped almost every thing,—not only the sun, moon and stars, but the earth, fire and water; and various sorts of animals—as oxen, goats, swine, cats, dogs, fish of the rivers, the river-horse, the orocodile, the fowls of the air, (as the hawk, stork and ibis,) insects and serpents, and also vegetables, (onions and garlic,) which occasioned the satirical poet* to say, *O sanctas gentes quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis, numina!* O holy nations, whose gods are born in their gardens! Some have worshipped the devil himself, for the reason, that he might not hurt them. Now, though all this betrays the dreadful depravity of human nature, the wretched ignorance and sad stupidity of mankind; yet at the same time such shocking idolatry in all its branches is a full proof of the truth and force of the argument, that all men, in all ages and countries, have been possessed of the notion of a God; since, rather than to have no God, they have chosen false ones. So deeply rooted is a sense of Deity in the minds of all men.

* Juvenal, Sat. 15. v. 1

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I am sensible that to this it is objected, that there have been, at different times, and in different countries, some particular persons* who have been reckoned atheists. But some of these men were only deriders of the gods of their country; mocking at them as unworthy of the name, as weak and insufficient to help them,—which they reasonably might do, just as Elijah mocked at Baal and his worshippers. Now the common people looked upon them as atheists who did not believe there was any God. Others were so accounted because they excluded the gods from any concern with human affairs; thinking they were otherwise employed, and such things below their notice, and not becoming their grandeur and dignity to regard. But these men were not deniers of the existence of God, but only of his providence as to the affairs of the world. Others have been rather practical than speculative atheists, like the fool in Psalm xiv. 1. who not only live as if there was no God, but wish in their hearts there were none; that so they might take their fill of sin without being accountable to a superior Being. The real speculative atheists have been very few, if any. Some have boldly asserted their disbelief of a God; but it is a question whether their hearts and mouths have agreed,—at least they have not been able to maintain their unbelief long† without some doubts and fears. And at most this only shows how much the reason of man may be debased, and how low it may sink when left to itself. These few

* Plutarch. de Placitis Philosoph. l. 1. c. 7.

† Plato observes, that no man that embraced this opinion from his youth, that there is no God, ever continued in it to old age De Legibus. l. 10. p. 947.

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instances are only particular exceptions to a general rule, which is not destroyed thereby,—even as it is no sufficient objection to the definition of man, as a rational creature, that there is now and then an idiot born of his race.

It is further objected, that there have been whole nations in Africa and America having no notion of Deity. But this has not been sufficiently proved, but depends upon the testimony of travelers, who differ so much that nothing can with certainty be concluded. "I should rather question," says Herbert, Lord Cherbury,* "whether the light of the sun has shone on the remotest regions, than that the knowledge of the Supreme Being is hidden from them, since the sun is only conspicuous in its own sphere, but the Supreme Being is seen in every thing." Diodorus Siculus† says, a few of the Ethiopians were of opinion there was no God; though before he had represented them as the first and most religious of all nations, as attested by all antiquity. The Hottentots about the Cape of Good Hope have been instanced as without any knowledge of Deity,—and certainly they are a beastly and brutish people, the most degenerate of the human species, and have survived the common instincts of humanity;‡ yet, according to Mr. Kolben's account of them, published some years ago,§ they appear to have some sense of a Supreme Being and of inferior deities. They express a superstitious joy at new and

* De Relig. Gent. c. 13. p. 225.

† Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 148.

‡ See the Philosoph. Transac. Abridged. Vol. V. part 2. p. 154.

§ See Dr. Watt's Strength and Weakness of human Reason, in Vol. II of his works, p. 262, &c.

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full moons; and it is said they pray to a Being that dwells above; and offer sacrifice of the best things they have, with eyes lifted up to heaven.* And later discoveries of other nations, previously reported atheists, show that they have a notion of the sun, or sky, or something or another as a sort of deity. Thus it had been observed of the Greenlanders,† that "they had neither a religion nor idolatrous worship; nor so much as any ceremonies to be perceived tending to it—hence the first missionaries entertained a supposition that there was not the least trace to be found among them of any conception of a divine Being, especially as they had no word to express him by. But when their language came to be understood better quite the reverse was found to be true. They had notions, though very vague and various, concerning the soul, and concerning spirits, and anxious solicitude about the state after death. And it was clearly established from some perfectly wild Greenlanders, that their ancestors must have believed in a supreme Being, and rendered him service—which their posterity neglected, till at last they lost every just conception of the Deity. It is manifest, that a faint idea of a divine Being lies concealed in the minds even of this people, because they directly assent, without any objection, to the doctrine of a God, and his attributes." And as to what is concluded from the irreligious lives of the inhabitants of some nations, we need not be sent to Africa for such atheists, we have enough of them in our own country. We are a nation of atheists

* See Ovington's Voyage to Surat, p 485, 492. and Dampier's Voyages, Vol. I. p. 541.

† Crantz's History of Greenland, Vol. I. b. 3. ch 5 p. 197, 198.

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in this sense—and, indeed, all men in an unregenerate state, be they Jews or Gentiles, are *atheists;* as the apostle calls them, (Eph. ii. 12.) "without God in the world, being alienated from the life of God." But there is such a general sense of Deity in mankind, and such a natural inclination to religion, of some sort or other, that some have thought that man should rather be defined as a religious than a rational animal.

2. *A second* argument may be taken from the law and light of nature—the general instinct in men, or impress of Deity on the minds of men. As soon as one begins to have the exercise of his rational powers, he thinks and speaks of God, and assents to the Being of a God. This follows upon the former argument, and is to be proved by it; for as Cicero* says, "The consent of all nations in any thing is to be reckoned the law of nature. And since all nations agree in the belief of a Deity, that must be a part of the law of nature, inscribed on the heart of every man. Seneca† makes use of this to prove there is a God—"because," says he, "an opinion or sense of Deity is *implanted* in the minds of all men." There are some who deny that there are any innate ideas in the minds of men, particularly concerning God —but to such writers and reasoners but little regard should be paid, when the inspired apostle assures us, that even the Gentiles, destitute of the law of Moses, have *the work of the law written in their hearts*, (Rom. ii. 15.) which, as it regards duty to God as well as man, necessarily supposes the knowledge of him. These notices of a divine Being do not flow from the previous

* Ut supra.

† Ut Supra.

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in-tructions of parents and others; but from a natura instinct. At most, they are only drawn forth by instruc tion and teaching. If this belief were the contrivanc of politicians to keep men in awe, and under subjection it must have been the contrivance of one or more. I of one, who is the man? If of more, when and where did they exist? And how shall it be accounted for that such a number of sage and wise men have been in the world, and none been able to detect the fallacy and discover it, and to free men from the imposition. Moreover, these notices appeared before any scheme of politics was formed; or kings or civil magistrates were in being. Plato* has refuted this notion; and represents it as a very pestilent one, both in private and in public. Nor are these notices by tradition from one to another; since traditions are peculiar to certain people. The Jews had theirs, and so had the Gentiles; and particular nations among them had separate ones from each other; but these are common to all mankind. Nor do they spring from a slavish fear and dread of punishment, though it has been said,† that fear makes gods, or produces a notion of Deity. But it will be found on the contrary that Deity produces fear.

The *innate* desires of men after happiness are so boundless as not to be satisfied. Let a man have ever so great a compass of knowledge and understanding; possess ever so large a portion of wealth and riches; be indulged with the gratification of his senses to the highest degree; or enjoy all the pleasure the whole creation can afford him; yet after all, according to the wise man,

* De Legibus, l. 10. p. 948.

† Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor, Statii Thebaid. l. 3. v. 661.

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the conclusion of the whole is, *all is vanity and vexation of spirit*, (Eccles. ii. 17.) Now these desires are not implanted in vain. There must be an object answerable to them; a perfect Being, which is no other than God; the first cause and last end of all things, of whom the Psalmist says, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth my soul desires besides thee.* (Ps. lxiii. 25.)

The *third* argument, proving the Being of God, may be taken from the works of creation. The apostle says, *the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen; being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead*, (Rom. i. 20.) Plutarch,* in answer to a question, Whence have men the knowledge of God? replies, "They first receive the knowledge of him from the beauty of things that appear; for nothing beautiful is made in vain, nor by chance, but wrought with some art. That the world is beautiful is manifest from its figure, color and magnitude, and from the variety of stars about the World." And these so clearly display the Being and power of God, as to leave the heathen without excuse, as the apostle observes. Most admirable was the reasoning of a wild Greenlander,† which he declared to a missionary to have been the reasoning of his mind before his conversion: "It is true, said he, 'we were ignorant heathens, and knew nothing of God, or a Saviour; but thou must not immagine that no Greenlander thinks about these things. I myself have often thought, a *kajak* (a boat) with all its tackle and

* De Placitis Philosoph. l. 1. c. 6. p. 879.

† Crantz's History of Greenland, ut supra.

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implements does not grow into existence of itself; but must be made by the labor and ingenuity of man. Now the meanest bird has far more skill displayed in its structure, than the best *kajak;* and no man can make a bird; and far greater art is shown in the formation of a man. Who was it that made him? I bethought me that he proceeded from his parents, and they from their parents; but there must have been the first parents. Whence did they come? common report informs me they grew out of the earth; but if so, why does it not still happen that men grow out of the earth? and from whence did this same earth itself, the sea, the sun, the moon and stars, arise into existence? Certainly there must be some Being who made all these things; a Being that always was, and can never cease to be. He must be very good too, because that every thing that he has made is good, useful and necessary for us. As soon as I heard you speak of this great Being, I believed it directly with all my heart; because I had so long desired to hear it." The notion of the eternity of the world has been imbibed by some heathens, but sufficiently confuted by others. Even Aristotle, to whom it is ascribed, asserts,* that "it was an ancient doctrine, and what all men received from their ancestors; that all things are of God, and consist by him." And those who believe the divine revelation cannot admit of any other doctrine; since that assures us, that *in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;* also that all things were made, *not of things which do appear*, but of nothing, (Gen. i. 1. Heb. xi 3.) For though the heavens and the earth were made out of a chaos, or out of pre-existent

* De Mundo, c. 6.

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matter, it may be reasonably asked, out of what was that pre-existent matter made? The answer must be, out of nothing; by creation, which can never be performed by the creature; for out of nothing, nothing can be made. If, therefore, all things were originally produced out of nothing, it must have been by one who is almighty, whom we rightly call God. No creature can produce itself; for then a creature must have been before it was; as that which makes must be before that which is made. It must act and operate before it exists; must be and not be at one and the same time, which are contradictions. It may be further observed; that effects, which depend upon causes in subordination to one another, cannot be traced *ad infinitum*;* but must be reduced to some first cause, where the inquiry must rest; and that first cause is God. Now here is an ample field to survey, which furnishes a variety of objects, and all proofs of Deity. There is nothing in the whole creation the mind can contemplate, the eye look upon, or the hand lay hold on, but what proclaims the Being of God. We look up to the heavens† above us; the surrounding atmosphere; the air in which we breathe; and the spreading sky, bespangled with stars of light, and adorned with the great luminaries; we behold that inexhaustible fountain of light and heat, under whose benign influences so many things are brought forth on

* Aristot. Metaphysic. l. 2. c. 2.

† Quis est tam vecors, qui aut cum suspexerit in cœlum deos esse non sentiat, Cicero. Orat 30. De Harusp. resp. So Plato de Legibus, l. 12. p. 999. Zaleucus apud Diodor. Sicul. l. 12. p. 84. Ed. Rhodoman.

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earth, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof; and we consider its form, magnitude and virtue, and its distance from us—whoever reflects on these things must acknowledge the work of an all-wise and almighty agent, we call God; and that all must be upheld, guided and directed by his hand alone. We take a view of the earth, of the whole terraqueous globe, hanging on nothing, like a ball in the air, poized with its own weight, the different parts of it all disposed for the use of man; and the consideration will oblige us to say, *Lord, thou art God*, which hast made *the heaven, earth and sea; and all that in them is*, (Acts. iv. 25.) In short, there is not a shell in the ocean, a sand on the shore, a spire of grass in the field, nor any flower in the garden, but what declare the Being of God. But our own composition is especially deserving of our notice—the fabric of the body, and the faculties of our souls. Whilst other animals look downwards to the earth, *os homini sublime dedit Deus*, as the poet says,* man has a lofty countenance given him, to behold the heavens, to lift up his face to the stars. And for what is this erect posture given him but to adore his Creator? And it is remarkable that there is a natural instinct in men to lift up their hands and eyes to heaven in thankfulness for mercies, and in supplication for deliverance from distress; which supposes a divine Being, to whom we owe the one, and from whom we expect the other. The several parts and members of the body are so framed and disposed as to be subservient to one another; so

* Ovid. Metamorpl. l. 1. fab. 2. v. 84, 85. Vid. Ciceronem de Natura Deorum, l. 2. Hence the Greeks call man ανθρωπος, from his looking upwards, Lactant. de Orig. err. l. 2. c. 1.

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that *the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you.* The inward parts which are weak and tender, and on which life much depends, are clothed with skin and flesh, and fenced with bones and sinews; and every bone, and every nerve, and every muscle is put in its proper place. All the organs of the senses, of sight, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling, are most wonderfully fitted for the purposes for which they are made. Galen, an ancient noted physician, being atheistically inclined, was convinced of his impiety by considering the admirable structure of the eye, its various humors, tunics and provision for defence and safety. The various operations performed in our bodies, without our knowledge or will, are enough to excite the highest admiration—as the circulation of the blood, the respiration of the lungs, the digestion and chylification of the food, the mixing of the chyle with the blood, thereby communicating nourishment which is sensibly perceived in the several parts of the body; and these, though before weakened and enfebled by hunger, thirst and labor, are in an instant revived and strenthened, and have thereby accretion and growth. The faculty and organ of speech peculiar to man; the constant supply of animal spirits; the continuance of the vital heat; the slender threads and small fibres spread throughout the body, which hold and perform their office seventy or eighty years—when considered, will oblige us to say with the inspired Psalmist, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well*—and will lead us to ascribe this curious

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piece of workmanship to no other than to the divine Being, *the God of all flesh living.*

But the soul of man, his more noble part, more fully discovers his original author;* being possessed of powers and faculties that none but God could give. It is endowed with an *understanding* capable of receiving and framing ideas; with *reason* to put these together, compare them with each other, and discourse concerning them; and with *judgment*, by which it passes sentence on matters it reasons upon, and determines for itself what is right or wrong, and so either approves or disapproves. The *mind* is susceptive of what is proposed to it, and can, by instruction or study, learn any language, and cultivate any art or science. It can reflect on things past, and can forecast and provide for things to come. It has a *will*, to accept or reject, to embrace or refuse what is proposed to it, with the greatest freedom of choice and with the most absolute power and sovereignty. It has *affections*, of love and hatred, joy and grief, hope and fear, &c. according to the different objects it is conversant with. There is also the *conscience*, which is to a man as a thousand witnesses, for or against him; and which, if it performs its office, will accuse him when he does ill, and commend him when he does well. The *memory* is a storehouse where men of every character and profession lay up their several stores, to have recourse unto, as their case and circumstances may require. And there is the *fancy*, or *imagination*, which can paint and describe to itself, in a lively manner, objects presented to it, of which it has entertained a conception, and can

* So Plato proves the Being of God from the soul of man, de Legibus, p. 998.

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fancy and imagine things that never were nor ever will be. But the *soul* is that wherein chiefly lay the image and likeness of God, when man was in his pure and innocent state; and though now sadly depraved by sin, yet it is capable of being renewed by the spirit of God, and of having the grace of God implanted in it; and endowed with immortality, it cannot die. Now to whom can such a noble and excellent creature as this owe its origin? but to the divine Being, who may with great propriety be called *the Father of spirits*, the Lord, the Jehovah, who *formeth the spirit of man within him.*

The *fourth* argument may be taken from the sustentation and government of the world, the provision made for all creatures, and especially for man. As the world is made by a divine Being, so by him it consists. Were there not such an almighty Being, "who upholds all things by the word of his power," they would sink and fall. Did he not bear up the pillars of the earth, they would tremble and shake, and not be able to bear its weight. The most stately, firm and well-built palace, unless repaired and maintained, will fall to decay and ruin; and so the grand and magnificent building of this world would soon be dissolved, did not the divine agent that made it, keep it up. As he who built all things is God, so must he be who supports the fabric of the universe—no less than an almighty hand can preserve and continue it. And though there are besides the human race such a vast number of creatures in the world—the beasts of the field, "the cattle on a thousand hills," the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea; there is food provided for them all, and they have "every one their portion of meat in due season." As for man, he is

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richly provided for, with a plenty and variety of all good things; not only for necessity, but for delight. And can all this be without the care, providence and interposition of a wise and almighty Being? Can these ever be thought to be the effects of blind chance and fortune? Is it not plain and clear, that God hereby "has not left himself without a witness of his existence and providence, in that he does good to all his creatures, and gives rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling mens' hearts with food and gladness." He continues the certain and constant revolution of "summer and winter, seed-time and harvest;" as well as night and day—all which have their peculiar usefulness and advantages to human life.

And there is provision made for the safety as well as for the wants of men. God has put upon the wild beasts of the field the fear and dread of man, and he has put into them a natural instinct to avoid the habitations of men, to resort to woods and deserts, and dwell in uninhabited places. They prowl about for their prey in the nigh; tand in the morning, when men go forth to their work, they return to their caves, dens and lurking-places. Were it not for the overruling providence of God, which governs the world, and restrains the lusts of men, *homo esset homini lupus*, "one man would be a wolf to another,"—neither life nor property would be secure, but would fall a prey to the rapine and violence of powerful oppressors. Human laws and civil magistracy do something to restrain men; but notwithstanding these, we see what outrages are committed—and how much greater would be their number were it not for the interposition of divine providence. It is owing to a

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divine Being that there are human forms of government, and that political schemes are framed, and laws made for the better regulation of mankind—for it is by him *kings reign, and princes decree justice.* And such is the rage and malice of Satan, and his principalities and powers, who go about our earth like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour; that were they not chained by almighty power, and limited by the providence of God, the whole race of men, or at least the godly, would be destroyed by them.

The *fifth* argument may be taken from the uncommon heroic actions, prodigies, wonders and miraculous things done in the world; which must require a superior and divine influence. A heroic action was that of Abraham, who, with three hundred household-servants, pursued after and engaged with four kings, and recovered the goods they had taken away. Shamgar fought with and killed six hundred Philistines with an ox goad. Samson slew a thousand of them with the jaw-bone of an ass. Jonathan and his armor-bearer attacked and took a garrison, and threw a whole army into a panic and confusion, who had been for some time a terror to the whole land of Israel. David, a stripling, fought and conquered Goliah, a monstrous giant. If Scripture is regarded merely as a common history, these merit our notice and credit as much as any of the relations in profane history, in which are recorded the magnanimous actions of heroes, kings and generals of armies; their wonderful successes and amazing conquests, which can never be supposed to have been done without superior power, and the overruling, influencing providence of the divine Being, who inspires men to do things

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beyond their natural skill and courage. There have been prodigies for which no natural cause can be assigned—such as the strange sights seen in the air, and voices heard in the temple before the destruction of Jerusalem, related by Josephus,* and confirmed by Tacitus,† an heathen historian. And history abounds with many others. But besides these, things really miraculous have been wrought, such as are not only out of and beyond, but contrary to the course of nature and to its settled laws. The miracles of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and his apostles, which are recorded in the Scriptures; and others mentioned in human writings, are so well attested as to command credence. Now, though these were not done to prove a divine Being, who needs not their aid, yet they necessarily suppose one.

The *sixth* argument may be formed from the prophesies of contingent future events, and their exact fulfilment. This is what is challenged and required from heathen deities, to prove their right to such a character; as being what none but God can do: *Let them bring forth and show us what shall happen: or declare us things for to come: show the things that are to come hereafter; that we may know that ye are gods.*‡ This is what none but the true God can do, or has done—of which there are many instances in the sacred writings. Prophecies, relating both to particular persons and to whole kingdoms and states, have had their exact accomplishment.

* De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 5. s. 3

† Hist. l. 5. c. 13.

‡ Isaiah xli. 21, 22.

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The *seventh* argument may be urged from the fears of men, the tortures of a guilty conscience and the dread of a future state. Some are terribly affrighted at thunder and lightning. Caligula, the Roman Emperor, at such times would hide himself in or under his bed—and yet this man set himself up for a god. Now these fears and frights are not merely on account of the awful sound of the thunder, and the dreadful flashes of lightning; but because of the divine and tremendous Being who is supposed to send them. The heathen were sensible that thunder is the voice of God, as the Scriptures represent it, and therefore called their Jove, *Jupiter tonans*, the thundering Jupiter. Many have been so terrified in their consciences on account of sin, that they could get no rest, nor enjoy peace any where, or by any means. Cain, under the terrors of an evil conscience, fancied that "every one that found him would slay him." And so with those wicked traitors, Catiline and Jugurtha; and those wicked emperors, those monsters in impiety, Tiberius and Nero.* The latter was tortured in his conscience as if he was continually haunted by his mother's ghost, and by furies with burning torches. Epicurus, the philosopher, though he taught men to dispise death, and out-brave it; yet, when he perceived that he himself was about to die, was most terribly frightened; and this has been the case with many others. Bold and "*strong spirits*," as atheistical persons love to be called, have been sometimes found to be very timorous and fearful at death. And, indeed, this is natural to all men. Now, from what do

* Sueton. Vita Tiberii, c. 67. et. Nero. c. 34. Tacit. Annal l. 6. c. 6.

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all these fears and tortures of conscience arise, but from the guilt of sin and a sense of a divine Being, who is above men, and will call them to an account for their sins, and take vengeance upon them? And, indeed, the eternal punishment that will be inflicted on them, will greatly consist in the tortures of their consciences, which is the worm that will never die; and, in a sense of divine wrath, which is that fire that will never be quenched.

The *eighth* and last argument may be taken from the judgments in the world; not only famine, sword, pestilence, earthquakes, &c. but such as have been inflicted on wicked, atheistic, perjured and blasphemous men. The universal flood, which swept away a world of ungodly men; and the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, with other cities of the plain, by fire and brimstone from heaven; are abundantly confirmed by the testimonies of heathen writers. There were awful instances mentioned in the New Testament, of Herod, who, being smitten by an angel, and eaten of worms, died, while the people were shouting him as a God, and he assenting to their flattery; and of Ananias and Sapphira being struck dead for lying unto God; and others of the same or a like kind, in all ages and countries, recorded in history and within our knowledge. Who now can hear or read such awful judgments, and deny the Being of God?

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CHAPTER II

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

The divine authority of the sacred Scriptures, forming as they do the basis of the succeeding topics, should be most clearly established with their claims to be a perfect, plain, and sure rule, and the standard of faith and practice; to be read constantly, studied diligently, and consulted with on all occasions.

The Scriptures comprise the books of the Old and of the New Testaments. The books of the Old Testament are the five books of Moses; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, sometimes called the Pentateuch; the historical books, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the two books of Samuel, the two of Kings, the two of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther; the poetical books, Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Solomon's Song; the prophetic books, the larger Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, with the Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel; the minor Prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The books of the New Testament are the four Evangelists—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; the Acts of the Apostles, the fourteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul, one of James, two of Peter, three of John, one of Jude, and the Revelation. These books are commonly called Canonical Scripture, because they have been always received by the church into the canon, or rule

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of faith. The books of the Old Testament, by the Jewish church, entirely agree with Josephus's account of them, and the catalogue of them brought from the East by Melito; and the books of both Testaments as we have them agree with the account which Origen gives of them in his time, and which has always been acknowledged by the Christian church. These are the books which the apostle calls, *all Scripture*, or the whole of Scripture, said by him to be *given by inspiration of God;* including not only the books of the Old Testament, but those of the New, which were all then written except the book of the Revelation. And, moreover, the declaration is true of what afterwards was written, as well as before.

From these must be excluded, as un-canonical, the books that bear the name of Apocrypha; which are sometimes bound up with the Bible, to the great scandal and disgrace of it. For though there may be some things in them worthy of regard, as human writings, there is such a mixture of falsehood and impiety, that they cannot by any means be allowed to be placed upon an equality with the sacred Scriptures. Likewise all such spurious books falsely ascribed to the apostles, or to some of the first Christians; as, The Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus; The Constitutions of the Apostles; Hermes's Pastor, &c. which carry in them manifest marks of imposture. To these may be added all human and unwritten traditions, pleaded for by the papists; and all dreams, visions, pretended revelations and prophecies, delivered in later ages by enthusiastic persons. Blessed be God, we have a more sure word of prophesy to attend unto.

1. The Scriptures claim *divine authority*—that they

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are from God, inspired by him, and the claim is just. They are called the law, or doctrine of the Lord; the testimony of the Lord; the statutes of the Lord; the commandment of the Lord; the fear of the Lord; and the judgment of the Lord; by the Psalmist David, Psal. xix. 7, 8, 9. The prophets frequently introduce their prophecies and discourses by saying, *the word of the Lord came* to them; and with a, *thus saith the Lord*, Isa. i. 10. Jer. ii. 1, 2. And our Lord expressly calls the Scripture the word of God, John x. 35, as it is also called, Heb. iv. 12. It is said God "at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake by the prophets;" and by his Son, and his apostles, in later times, (chap. i. 1, 2.)

When we say that the Scriptures are the word of God, or that this word is of God; we do not mean that it was spoken with an articulate voice by him; or written immediately by the finger of God. The law of the Decalogue, or the Ten Commands, indeed, were articulately spoken by him, and the writing of them was the writing of God, Exod. xx. 1. and xxxi. 18. and xxxii. 15. in which he set an example to his servants, in after times, to write what might be suggested to them by him that it might remain to be read; and it is enough that they were bid to write what he delivered to them. What was ordered by the Lord to be written, is the same as if written by himself; especially since the penmen wrote as they were directed, dictated and inspired by him, and "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." They did not speak and write of their own knowledge, nor according to their own will, when and what they pleased; but according to the will of God, what he suggested, and when he inspired. 2 Pet. i. 21.

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Not all that is contained in the Scriptures was spoken by God. Some parts are the words of others. There are the speeches of Satan, and bad ones they are—as when he suggested that Job was not a sincere worshipper of God; and requested he might have leave to do an injury both to his property and to his person, Job i. 9, 10, 11. and ii. 4, 5, 6. So when he tempted our Lord, and moved him to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and destroy himself; and not succeeding in that, urged him to fall down and worship him, Matt. iv. 5. 9. But the penmen of these books, in which these speeches are, were moved and directed by the Lord to commit them to writing; so that though they themselves are not the word of God, yet that they are written, and are on record, is of God; directed and done to show the malice, pride, blasphemy and impiety of that wicked spirit. There are also speeches of bad men, as of Cain, Pharaoh and others, ordered to be written to discover the more the corruption of human nature. Also those of good men, as of Moses, David, Jonah, and particularly the friends of Job, who in their long discourses said not that which was right, as Job did. And Job himself did not say in every speech what was right of God. Yet these speeches are on record, by divine order, to prove matters of fact, and to show the weaknesses and frailties of the best of men. Some of the writers, such as Moses, and the historical ones, being eye and ear-witnesses, could have written many things from their own knowledge and memories; and other facts they might have taken from diaries, annals and journals of their own and former times; yet in all they were under the impulse and direction of God; so that all may be truly

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said to have been by divine authority. In the writings and discourses of the apostle Paul, are several quotations from heathen authors. He used one from Aratus, when he was discoursing before the wise men at Athens; *as certain*, said he, *of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring*, Acts xvii. 28. Another from Menander: *Evil communications corrupt good manners*, 1 Cor. xv. 33. And another from Epimenides, a poet of Crete, who said the Cretians were *always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.* Though the words are not of God, yet that they were quoted and written, was of God.

Let it be observed, that not the matter of the Scriptures only, but the very words in which they are written are of God. Some who are not for organic inspiration, as they call it, think that the sacred writers were only furnished by God with matter, and had general ideas of things given them, and were left to clothe them with their own words, and to use their own style; which they suppose accounts for the difference of style to be observed in them. But if this was the case, as it sometimes is with men, that they have clear and satisfactory ideas of things in their own minds, and yet are at a loss for proper words to express and convey the sense of them to others; so it might have been with the sacred writers, if words were not suggested to them, as well as matter. Then we should be left at an uncertainty about the real sense of the holy Spirit, if not led into a wrong one. It seems, therefore, most agreeable that words as well as matter were given by divine inspiration. As for difference of style, as it was easy with God to direct to the use of proper words, so he could accommodate himself to the style such persons were wont to use, and which

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was natural to them, and agreeable to their genius and circumstances This may be confirmed from the testimonies of the writers themselves. Says David, *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. The apostle Paul speaks of himself, and other inspired apostles of the New Testament, *Which things*, says he, *we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Gost teacheth*, 1 Cor. ii. 13. and it is *the writing*, or the word of God as written, that is *by inspiration of God*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. But then this is to be understood of the original language in which the Scriptures were written, and not of translations; unless it could be thought, that the translators of the Bible were under the divine inspiration also in translating, and were directed of God to the use of words they have rendered the original by; which is not reasonable to suppose. The books of the Old Testament were written chiefly in the Hebrew language, except some few passages in Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezra and Esther, in the Chaldee language; and the New Testament in Greek—in which languages only they can be reckoned canonical and authentic. Like the charters and diplomas of princes; the wills or testaments of men; or any deeds made by them; only the original exemplar is authentic, and not translations, transcriptions, and copies, though ever so perfect. And to the Bible, in its original, is every translation to be brought, and by it to be examined, tried and judged, corrected and amended. If this were not the case we should have no certain and infallible rule. The papists plead for their vulgate Latin version; which has been decreed authentic by the council of Trent; though it abounds with innumerable errors

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and mistakes; and they go so far as to assert that the Scriptures, in their originals, ought to submit to and be corrected by their version; which is absurd and ridiculous. There need be no apprehensions because translations are not upon an equality with the original text, especially our own; for as it has been the will of God that the Bible should be translated into different languages, he has taken care, in his providence, to raise up men capable of such performance. And whenever men have been engaged in this work who were well skilled in the languages, partakers of the grace of God, of sound principles, integrity and faithfulness, and having the fear of God before their eyes; they have never failed to produce a translation worthy of acceptation. And though they have mistook some words and phrases, and erred in some lesser and lighter matters; yet not so as to affect any momentous article of faith or practice; and, therefore, such translations as ours may be regarded as the rule of faith. And if any scruple should remain on this account, it will suffice to observe that the Scriptures, in our English translation, have been blessed of God for the conversion, comfort and edification of thousands and thousands. And the same may be said of all others, so far as they agree with the original, that they are the rule of faith and practice, and alike useful.

There are those who in amazing ignorance and stupidity decry learning and learned men. But what would they have done for a Bible had it not been for men of learning as instruments? God must have wrought a miracle for them; and continued that miracle in every nation, in every age, and to every individual; that is the gift of tongues, in a supernatural way, as bestowed

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upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Bless God, therefore, and be thankful that he has, in his providence, raised up such men to translate the Bible into the mother tongue of every nation, and particularly into ours; and that he still continues to raise up such who are able to defend the translation made against the erroneous, and enemies of the truth; and to correct and amend it in those lesser matters, in which it may have come short, and to illustrate and explain it by their learned notes upon it. The claim of the Scriptures to a divine authority may be evinced,

1. From the subject-matter of them. They contain nothing unworthy of God; nothing contrary to his truth, faithfulness, purity, holiness, wisdom and goodness, or to any of the perfections of his nature. There is no falsehood or contradiction in them, and they may with great propriety be called, as they are, *The Scriptures of truth*, and the *Word of truth*, Dan. x. 21. Eph. i. 13. There is nothing impious or impure, absurd or ridiculous in them; as in the Al-koran of Mahomet; or as in the Pagan treatises of gods; which abound with tales of murders, adulteries and thefts.

But the Scriptures are pure and holy. The Holy Spirit dictated them, holy men spoke and wrote them, and they are justly called *holy Scriptures*, Rom. i. 2. and plainly show that they came from the holy God. The doctrines are holy; are according to godliness, and tend to promote it. They teach and influence men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly—the law of God is *holy, just and good*, Rom. vii. 12. It is holy in its own nature, and requires nothing but what is for the good of men, what

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is but reasonable service to God, and what is just between man and man. There is in natural men, whose carnal minds are enmity to God, a backwardness and even aversion to reading the Scriptures; because their doctrines and precepts are so pure and holy. They choose to read an idle romance, an impure novel, or any profane writings and histories, rather than the Bible; and from that may be drawn no inconsiderable argument in favor of the origin of the latter. The style of the Scriptures is pure, holy, chaste and clean; free from all levity and obscurity, and from every thing that might be offensive to the ear of the chaste and pious. And there are remarkable instances in the marginal readings of some passages in the Hebrew text, to this end; and care should be taken in all translations to keep up, as much as may be, to the original purity of the Scriptures.

There are some things recorded in the Scriptures which could never have been known but by revelation from God himself—as with respect to the creation of the world, and the origin of mankind—and hence, without this revelation, men have run into strange, absurd and extravagant notions about these things. Yea, the Scriptures inform us what was done in eternity, which none but God himself could reveal, and make known to men —as the choice of men in Christ to everlasting salvation, which was from the beginning; not of time, but before time or the earth was, even "before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4. And there is revealed a council held between the divine Persons concerning the salvation of man; which may be called the *council of peace*, Zech. vi. 13 "God was in Christ reconciling the world

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unto himself," and the scheme of peace and reconciliation and plan of salvation were formed and agreed upon; and the covenant of grace, on the behalf of the chosen ones, was made with Christ from eternity; whose "goings forth in it were of old, from everlasting;" covenanting with his Father for them, and agreeing to be their Surety and Saviour; to become incarnate, and obey and suffer for them and so work out their salvation; representing their persons and taking the charge and care of them, and of all blessings of grace given them, and of all promises made to them, in him, before the world began; in which covenant he was set up as Mediator, "from everlasting, or ever the earth was," Prov. viii. 22, 23. Mic. v. 2. 2 Tim. i. 9. Eph. i. 3, 4. All this could never have been known unless revealed by God himself.

There are prophecies recorded in the Scriptures which God only could foreknow and foretel, which have come to pass, proving the revelation to be of God. Some of them relate to particular persons and contingent events —as Josiah, who was prophesied of by name three or four hundred years before his birth, to be born to the house of David, and to "offer up the idolatrous priests on Jeroboam's altar, and burn mens' bones on it;" all which exactly came to pass, (see 1 Kings xiii. 2. compared with 2 Kings xxiii. 17, 20.) Cyrus, king of Persia, also was prophesied of by name, more than two hundrod years before his birth—his conquests and riches, and it was foretold that he should let the captive Jews go free, without price or reward, and give orders for the rebuilding their temple; which was all punctually fulfilled, (Isa. xliv. 28, and xlv. 1, 2, 3, 13, see Ezra i. 1, 2,

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3, 4.) Other fulfilled prophecies relate to kingdoms and states—as the Egyptians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Assyrians, Babylonians and others which are now no more. The descent of the Jews into Egypt, their abode and bondage there, and their coming from thence with great riches—were made known to their great ancestor Abraham, (Gen. xv. 14. see Exod xii. 25, 40, 41.) And their captivity in Babylon, and return from thence after seventy years, (Jer. xxx. 10, 11. see Dan. ix. 2.) and all their miseries and afflictions in their last destruction, and present state, are prophetically described in Deut. xxviii. But the prophecies concerning Christ, are especially worthy of notice—his incarnation and birth of a virgin; the place where he should be born; of what nation, tribe and family; his sufferings and death, his burial, resurrection, ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, are all plainly pointed out in prophecy; and with many other things relating to him, have had their exact accomplishment. To these might be added predictions of the calling of the Gentiles by many of the prophets; the abolition of paganism in the Roman empire; the rise, power and ruin of Antichrist; which are particularly spoken of in the book of the Revelation.

There are some things in the Scriptures which, though not contrary to reason, yet are above the capacity of men ever to have discovered—as the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, whose distinct mode of subsisting is mysterious to us; the eternal generation of the Son of God, which is ineffable by us; his incarnation and birth of a virgin, under the power of the Holy Ghost, which is wonderful and amazing; the union of the human

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nature to his divine person, which is, "without controversy, the great mystery of Godliness." The regeneration of men by the Spirit of God, and the manner of his operation on the souls of men, which made a master in Israel say, "How can these things be?" and the resurrection of the body at the last day, reckoned by the Gentiles incredible. These things, though revealed, cannot be accounted for upon the principles of nature and reason.

The Scriptures are harmonious. The doctrines, though delivered at sundry times, and in divers manners, all agree. The two Testaments "are like two young roes that are twins;" to which some think they are compared in Cant. iv. 5. and vii. 3. and like the Cherubim over the mercy-seat, which were of one beaten piece, exactly alike, looking to one another, and both to the mercy-seat. And as to historical facts, any seeming contradictions that may be observed are easily reconciled with a little care, diligence and study; and some of these arise from the carelessness of transcribers putting one word or letter for another. But even these instances are few, and not very material—never affecting any article of faith or practice. Such care has divine providence taken of these peculiar and important writings.

2. The style and manner in which the Scriptures are written is a further evidence of their divine original. The majesty in which they appear, and the authoritative manner in which they are delivered, demand attention and assent, and command reverence and acceptance. The figures used are inimitable by creatures, and such as it would be daring and presumptuous for any but God to use, with whom is terrible majesty—such as, *Hear, O*

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heavens, and *I will speak*, Deut. xxxii. 1. Isa. i. 2. The sublimity of the style exceeds all other writings. Longinus, a heathen orator, who wrote *upon the Sublime*, admired some passages in the writings of Moses, particularly Gen. i. 3. That early composition, the book of Job, abounds with strong and lofty expressions, such as are not to be found in human writings. The book of Psalms is full of bright figures and inimitable language, particularly see Psalm xviii. 7—15. and xxxix. 3—10. and cxiii. 3—8. and cxxxix. 7—12. The prophecies of Isaiah are fraught with a rich treasure of divine elocution, which surpasses all that is to be met with in the writings of men; and it is remarkable that in some of the inspired writers, who have been bred up in a rustic manner, are found some of the most grand images, lively picturesques, and highest flights of language, as in Amos the herdman, chap. iv. 13. and ix. 2, 6.

3. Another argument for the divine authority of the Scriptures may be taken from their penmen and writers. Many of these were men of no education, in low stations of life, taken from the flock and from the herd, from their nets and from the humblest employments; and what they wrote, both as to matter and manner, was above and beyond their ordinary capacities; but they "spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

They lived in different times and places, were of different interests and capacities, and in different conditions and circumstances; and yet they were all of the same sentiment, speaking and writing the same things, delivering out the same truths and doctrines, and enjoining the same moral duties of religion, and the same positive

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precepts, according to the different dispensations under which they were; and this shows that they were dictated, and influenced in all, by the same Spirit of God. They were holy and good men, partakers of the grace of God; and, therefore, could never have given in to an imposture, delivered out a known lie, nor obtruded a falsehood upon the world.

They appear to have been plain, honest and faithful men; concealing not their own failings and infirmities. Moses published his own weaknesses and inadvertencies, and spared not the blemishes of his family; neither of his more remote ancestor Levi, in the case of the Shechemites; nor of his immediate parents, their illegal marriage. Nor did he spare his favorite people, the Israelites, their rebellion and obstinacy, and idolatry—and the same may be observed of other inspired writers. They were disinterested men, seeking neither popular applause, worldly wealth, nor agrandizement to themselves or their families. Moses, when the Lord offered to make him a great nation, and cut off the people of Israel for their sins, refused more than once, preferring the public good to his own advantage. Though he was king in Jeshurun, he was not careful to have any of his posterity succeed him in his office; and though the priesthood was conferred on Aaron his brother, and his sons, yet no other provision was made for his own family, than to attend the lower services of the tabernacle in common with the rest of his tribe. The apostles of Christ, who left all and followed their Master, sought not wealth nor honor; but, on the contrary, exposed themselves to reproach, poverty, vexation, trouble, persecution and death, which they would never have done

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had they not been fully satisfied of their mission of God, and of their message from him. In short, the writers of the Scriptures seem to have been men who could not have been imposed upon themselves, nor have sought to impose on others.

4. The sacred writings, attended with a divine power and influence, have had wonderful effect upon the hearts and lives of men. Many, upon reading the Scriptures, have been converted from error, superstition and idolatry, and from vicious courses of life, to embrace and profess the truth, and to live holy lives. This "Word of God has been quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword;" has pierced and penetrated into the recesses of the heart, and laid open its secrets; has been the means of enlightening the mind, quickening the soul, regenerating and sanctifying the heart, of producing faith, and every other grace in it, and of strengthening, comforting and reviving the spirits of the people of God when in distress, by afflictions, or Satan's temptations; so that every good man has a testimony within himself of its divine authority, (see 1 John v. 9, 10.)

5. The testimony borne to the Scriptures by miracles, which only Omnipotence itself could work, abundantly confirm their genuineness. God would never do these to establish the character of imposters, or to confirm a lie.

6. The hatred and opposition of men, and the enmity of devils afford no inconsiderable argument in favor of their divinity; for were they of men, men would not have such disgust and disapprobation toward them and oppose them. By this are to be known the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. What is of the world, and

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merely human, is approved by the men of the world; but what is of God is rejected, 1 John iv. 5, 6 and if these writings were of Satan, and the work of forgery, imposture and deceit, that wicked spirit would never have shown such spite to them, nor have taken such pains to tempt and prevail upon men not to read them; and to corrupt, destroy and root them out of the world.

7. The awful judgments of God on those who have despised his Word, and have endeavored to destroy it, are no mean evidence that God has thus shown his resentment of such conduct, as illustrated by the instance of Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, who cut to pieces the copies of the book of the law wherever he found them, and put to death all with whom they were found, (1 Maccab. i. 59, 60.) This man died of a violent disease in his bowels, his body was covered with worms, and his flesh flaked off, attended with an intolerable stench, 2 Maccab. ix. 5, 9. Dioclesian, the Roman emperor, by an edict ordered all the sacred books to be burnt, that, if possible, he might root Christianity out of the world; but when he found he could not accomplish his design, he, through madness and despair, abdicated his throne and retired to private life, and at last poisened himself. Many more instances might be produced.

8. The antiquity and continuance of these writings is an argument in their favor. Tertullian says, "That which is most ancient is most true." Men from the beginning had knowledge of God, and of the way of salvation, and the manner in which God should be worshipped; which must have been revealed, though for some time not delivered in writing. The writings of Moses are more ancient, by many hundred years, than

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any profane writings, the earliest of which are the poems of Homer and Hesiod, who flourished about the time of Isaiah. The divine writings have been preserved, notwithstanding the malice of men and devils, thousands of years, when other writings have been lost.

The Scriptures receive no small evidence of their authority from the testimonies of many heathen writers who agree with them in chronology, geography and history—as concerning the creation of the world, Noah's flood, the tower of Babal, the confusion of languages, the peopling the earth by the sons of Noah, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah; with many other things respecting the people of Israel, their origin, laws, &c.*

II. *The perfection of the Scriptures.*

When we assert perfection, we do not mean a perfect account of all that God has done from the beginning of time, in the dispensations of his providence in the world, and in the distributions of his grace to the sons of men; though the Scriptures do relate much of the state and condition of the church of God as it has been in all ages, and as it will be to the end of time. They profess not to contain all the discourses, exhortations, admonitions, cautions and counsels of the prophets, nor all the sermons of the apostles, nor all the words and acts of the Lord Jesus Christ—to do which, the evangelist observes, *even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*, (John xx. 30. and xxi. 25.) Whatever is necessary to salvation, what to be believed and performed is plainly recorded.

1. The word of God, "given by inspiration of God,"

* See Gale's Court of the Gentiles.

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who is their author, and who is a perfect Being, in whom is *no darkness at all*, must be free from every imperfection. As his works of creation, providence and redemption, so must his work of the Scriptures be.

2. That there was a First and Second Testament, an Old and a New one, is plainly intimated, Heb. ix. 15. Now a man's testament, or will, contains the whole of his will and pleasure, concerning the disposition of his estate to whomsoever he pleases, or it is not properly his will and testament. A man's testament, *if it be confirmed*, as the apostle observes, *no man disannulleth or addeth thereto*, Gal. iii. 15. Such are the Scriptures. They contain the whole will of God, about the disposition of the blessings of grace, and of the heavenly inheritance, to those who are appointed by him heirs; and being ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ, are so sure and firm as not to be disannulled, and so perfect that nothing can be added thereunto.

3. The term *perfect* is expressly given to them—*the law of the Lord is perfect*, Psalm xix. 7. This is to be understood, not of the Decalogue, or Ten Commands, but of the doctrine of the Lord, as the phrase signifies; even what was delivered in the sacred writings extant in the times of David; and if it was perfect then as to its substance, then much more must it appear so by the accession of the prophets, and the books of the New Testament, in which there are plainer and clearer discoveries of the mind and will of God.

4. The essential parts of the Scriptures may be reduced to two heads, the Law and the Gospel. The Law is a perfect rule of duty; it contains what is the *good*, *acceptable* and *perfect will of God*, Rom. xii. 2.

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The whole duty of man, both toward God and man, is comprehended in these two commandments, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, &c. *and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*, Matt. xxii. 37—40. The Gospel is the *perfect law*, or doctrine, *of liberty* which the apostle James speaks of, chap. i. 25. and which proclaims the glorious liberty of the children of God by Christ. It is *perfect*—it treats of perfect things; of perfect justification by Christ, of full pardon of sin through his blood, and complete salvation in him; and contains a perfect plan of truth; every truth, "as it is in Jesus;" all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—it is the whole, *or all the counsel of God*, concerning the spiritual and eternal salvation of men, (Acts xx. 27.)

5. The books of the Old Testament were complete and perfect in the times of Christ; not one was wanting, nor any mutilated or corrupted. The Jews, he says, *have Moses and the prophets;* and he himself, *beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself*, (Luke xvi. 24. and xxiv. 27.) So that they had not only the five books of Moses, but *all* the prophets, and *all* the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The Jews had *the oracle of God committed* to their care, (Rom. iii. 2.) and they have been faithful keepers of them, even to superstition and scrupulous nicety, numbering not only the books and sections, but also the verses, words and letters, and there never was any reason to be given for any disposition on their part to corrupt any part of the Old Testament. On the coming of Christ it was not their interest to do it, and it having then been translated into the Greek tongue, they would have been detected and after the

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coming of Christ they could not do it if they would, copies being in the hands of Christians. Whatever attempts may have been made by any under the Christian name, to corrupt some copies of either Testament, may be, and have been detected. Whatever mistakes may be made through the carelessness of transcribers of copies, are to be corrected by other copies, which God, in his providence, has preserved, as it would seem, for such purpose. Thus we have a perfect canon, or rule of faith and practice. It is objected to the perfection of the books of the Old Testament, that the books of Nathan, Gad, and Iddo, the prophets mentioned therein, are lost; but then it should be proved that these were inspired writings, and, indeed, that they are lost; they may be the same, as some think, with the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. And it is also objected to those of the New Testament, that there was an epistle from Laodicea, (Col. iv. 16.) and another to the Corinthians, distinct from those we have, (1 Cor. v. 9.) and neither of them now extant. As to the first, it is not an epistle *to*, but *from* Laodicea; and may refer to one of the epistles we have, written by the apostle Paul, when at that place. And as to that to the Corinthians, it does not appear to be another and distinct, but the same he was then writing.

6. This may be further evinced from the charge that is given, "not to add unto, nor diminish from, any part of the sacred writings, law or gospel." This is strictly enjoined upon the Israelites to observe with respect to the law given them by Moses, (Deut. iv. 2. and xii. 32.) With respect to the Gospel, the apostle Paul says, *Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other*

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gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you—and ye have received, let him be accursed, Gal. i. 8, 9. The wise man, or Agur, says of the Scriptures in his time, *Every word is pure—add thou not unto his words.* And the apostle and evangelist John, closes the canon of the Scriptures with these remarkable words, *If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life*, &c. (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.) Now if there is nothing superfluous in the Scriptures, to be taken from them; and nothing defective in them that requires any addition, then they must be perfect.

7. Perfection is shown in their sufficiency to answer the ends and purposes for which they were written; as, *for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness*, (2 Tim. iii. 16.) There is no spiritual truth or evangelical doctrine which they do not contain. They are called *the Scriptures of truth;* not only because they came from the God of truth, and whatsoever is in them is truth; but they contain *all truth;* which the Spirit of God, the dictator of them, guides into, and that by means of them, (see Dan. x. 21. John xvi. 13.) Not every doctrine proposed by men is immediately to be credited; but to be tried, proved and judged by the holy Scriptures, which are to be searched, as they were by the Berœans; for, *to the law and to the testimony; if men speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

The Scriptures are sufficient to *make a man of God perfect* and *thoroughly furnish* him *unto all good works*,

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(2 Tim. iii. 17.) Not a private good man only, but one in a public character and office—a prophet, a preacher, and minister of the word—in which sense the phrase is used both in the Old and New Testament, (1 Sam. ix. 6, 7. 1 Tim. vi. 11.) An acquaintance with them fits him for the work of the ministry, and furnishes him with sound doctrine, to deliver out to the edification of others. He becomes "a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God; and able to bring out of his treasure things new and old." If they are able to make such a man perfect, they must be perfect themselves.

The Scriptures answer not only to the learning and instruction of private as well as public men; but to make them patient under afflictions, giving comfort and hope of deliverance—for the apostle says, *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope*, Rom. xv. 4. For every afflictive circumstance there is a suitable promise in the word of God, enlivening, cheering and comforting the soul, Psalm cxix. 49, 50. The Scriptures are written to promote and increase the spiritual joy of God's people, and that that joy might be full. They must, therefore, be full and perfect themselves, (1 John i. 3, 4.)

8. The Scriptures are able to make a man *wise unto salvation*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. The Gospel of salvation points out to men the way; gives an account of Christ its author, and of the salvation itself wrought out by him; and describes the persons who have an interest in it, and shall enjoy it; and who, through the grace of God, are made wise enough to see their need of it, seek after it and embrace it—not barely by reading the word, but

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through the Spirit of wisdom and revelation opening their eyes to see what is contained in it, and applying it to them; whereby the Gospel becomes to them "the power of God unto salvation." In short, the Scriptures contain all things necessary to be believed, unto salvation; and are written for this end, that men *might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing,* they *might have life through his name,* John xx. 31.

III. *The perspicuity of the Scriptures.*

The Bible should be as it is, clear and plain, since it is a rule of faith and practice. Some parts and some things are dark and obscure; but by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, or dark passages with those that are clearer, they may be plainly understood. Moreover, the light of the Scriptures has been a growing one. Dim under the dispensation of the law of Moses, it became clearer through the writings of the prophets, and clearest under the Gospel; where, "as in a glass, we behold, with open face, the glory of the Lord." Yet in the gospel dispensation, and in such clear writings and epistles as those of the apostle Paul, who used *great plainness of speech,* there are some things *hard to be understood,* see 2 Cor. iii. 12—18. 2 Pet. iii. 16. And this is so ordered to remove all contempt of the Scriptures, to humble arrogance and pride, to engage reverence, to excite attention, and to induce men to search them with close study, application and prayer. Nor are the Scriptures clear and plain to every one who reads them—they are a sealed book, which neither the learned or unlearned can understand and interpret with-

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out the Spirit of God, who was the dictator of them The natural man, by the mere light of nature, and dint of reason may understand the grammatical sense of words; but he does not understand their spiritual meaning. Yet they are so fully expressed and clearly revealed, that if the Gospel is hid to any, it is to those that perish, who are left to the native darkness of their minds, and to be so "blinded by the god of this world,' that the glorious light of the Gospel might not shine into them, see Isa. xxix. 11, 12. 1 Cor. ii. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. But the Scriptures are plain to those who have a spiritual understanding; who are spiritual men; "to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom." What can be plainer than the precepts of the law, commanding one thing and forbidding another? in what plain language are they expressed, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me*, &c. *Thou shalt not kill*, &c.? And how clearly is asserted the great and fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, "That salvation is alone by Jesus Christ, through the free grace of God; and not of the works of men?" And so is every thing of belief necessary unto salvation. In short, as Gregory says,* they are like a full and deep river, in which, in different places, the lamb may walk and the elephant swim.

The whole of Scripture is the *sure word of prophecy; whereunto* men *do well* to *take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place;* and is thus the means of dispelling the darkness of ignorance, error and unbelief; and of giving light all around, both with respect to doctrine and duty, see 2 Pet. i. 19. All classes were to read them. Not only were the kings of Israel to read

* Præfat. in Job.

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the law of the Lord, but all the people; and at a certain time of the year they were to assemble together to hear it read—men, women and children. But if it had not been plain and clear, and easy to be understood, it would have been to no purpose for them to attend it, Deut. vii. 19. and xxxi. 11, 12, 13. Our Lord advises to search the Scriptures;" which supposes them legible and inteligible, (John v. 39.) and the Beræns are commended as more noble than those of Thessalonica, because they searched the Scriptures daily, and compared what they heard with them; that they might know whether they were right or no, Acts xvii. 11. see Rev. i. 3. In the times of Nehemiah and Ezra, persons of every sex and age, who were at years of maturity, and had the exercise of their rational faculties, had the law read unto them, (Neh. viii. 3.) and Timothy, from a child, knew the holy Scriptures, 2 Tim. iii. 15.

IV. *The necessity of the Scriptures.*

A divine revelation was necessary to Adam, in a state of innocence; else he could not have known any thing of his creation, the manner in which God was to be served and worshipped, or the will of God as to abstinence from eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And if our first parents stood in need of a divine revelation, as a rule and guide in their state of integrity, then much more we in our present state of ignorance and depravity. After the fall, it was owing to divine revelation that man had any knowledge of the way of salvation; and though this revelation, for a time unwritten, was handed down by tradition to the patriarchs before the flood, and thence for some time after,

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whilst the lives of men were of a long continuance, and it required but few hands to transmit it, yet when mens' lives were shortened, and it was the pleasure of God to make further and clearer discoveries of his mind and will, and to frame new laws and rules of worship in different dispensations, it then seemed proper and necessary to commit them to writing.

The light of nature or reason is insufficient. That there is a God may be known by the light of nature; but *who* and *what* he is, men, destitute of a divine revelation have never known. Multitudes have gone into polytheism, and have embraced for gods almost every thing in and under the heavens. Though, as the apostle says, the Gentiles without the law, *do by nature the things contained in the law;* and are *a law to themselves, which show the work of the law written on their hearts; their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another*, Rom. ii. 14, 15. and so have some notion of the difference between moral good and evil; yet this is not so clear and extensive, but that some of the greatest moralists among them gave in to, allowed of and recommended the most notorious vices. Chrysipus* allowed of incest; Plato† commended community of wives; Socrates a plurality of wives, which he enforced by his own example;‡ Cicero§ pleaded for fornication; the Stoics, a grave set of moralists, for the use of obscene words,‖ and recommended

* Laertius in Vita ejus.
† Vid. Grotium in Eph. 5, 6.
‡ Laertius in Vita ejus.
§ Orat. 34. pro Cœlio.
‖ Vid. Ciceron. Ep. l. 9. ep. 22.

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self-murder as becoming a wise man,* and as his duty in some cases. So dim was this light of nature.

The light of nature leaves men entirely without the knowledge of the way of salvation by the Son of God. And without revelation even angels would not be able, of themselves, to know the way of saving sinful men, or how sinful men can be justified before God; wherefore, in order to know this, they "desire to look into it," 1 Pet. i. 12.

Let us, therefore, bless God that we have a better rule and guide—"a more sure word of prophecy to take heed unto." Let us have constant recourse to it, as the standard of faith and practice—try every doctrine and practice by it, believe and act as that directs us, and learn every thing from it that may be for our good and the glory of God.

CHAPTER III.

THE NAMES OF GOD.

The names of persons and things are usually the first known of them, and where the name of God is not known, he himself cannot be known. The consideration of his names is especially worthy of regard, because they serve to lead into some knowledge of his nature and perfections. Properly speaking, since God is incomprehensible, he is not nominable; and being but one he has no need of a name to distinguish him; and, therefore, Plato† says, he

* Vid. Lips. Manuduct. Stoic. Philosoph. Dissert. 22. p. 365.

† In parmenide, p. 1120. Ed. Ficin. So Trismegistus apud Lactant. Institut. l. 1. c 3.

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has no name; and hence he commonly calls him το ον, *Ens, The Being.* So when Moses asked the Lord what he should say to the children of Israel, should they ask the name of him who sent him, he was bade say, *I am that I am;* that is, The eternal Being, the Being of beings; which his name Jehovah is expressive of Nevertheless, there are names of God in the Scriptures taken from one or other of his attributes, which are worthy of consideration.

Some of the names of God, as Zanchy* observes, respect him as the subject, as Jehovah, Lord, God—and others are predicates, spoken of him, or attributed to him, as holy, just, good, &c. Some respect the relation in which the divine Persons in the Godhead stand to each other, as Father, Son and Spirit—others the relation of God to the creatures, as Creator, Preserver, Governor, &c. and some are common to the Three divine persons, as Jehovah, God, Father, Spirit. Some are peculiar to each, as the epithets, *unbegotten, begotten,* proceeding from the Father and the Son. Some are figurative and metaphorical, taken from creatures, to whom God is compared; and others are proper names, by which he either calls himself, or is called by the prophets and apostles in the books of the Old and New Testaments.

1. *Elohim,* the first name of God we meet with in Scripture, is translated God, (Gen. i. 1.) and is most frequently used throughout the whole Old Testament, sometimes, indeed, improperly of creatures, angels, men and false deities, (Psalm viii. 5. and lxxxii. 1, 6 Jer. x. 11.)

Some derive this word from a root, which signifies to

* De Natura Dei, l. 1. c. 4.

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curse and swear; but do not agree as to the reasons why this name should be given to the divine Being. But Elohim cannot be derived from the word so signifying, because it has the immoveable and immutable ה as appears from the point *mappick*, in its singular Eloah, and from the construction of it, which that word has not.

According to the opinions of many learned men* the word Elohim may better be derived from a word in the Arabic language, which signifies to *worship;* a fit name for God, who is the sole object of religious worship and adoration. It is a word of the plural number, and is most frequently in this form, though it has a singular, which is sometimes used. Being joined with a verb singular, as in Gen. i. 1. it is thought† to denote a plurality of persons in the unity of the divine essence; and certain it is, that three persons, Father, Son and Spirit, appeared, and were concerned in the creation of all things, (Gen. i. 1, 2, 3. Psalm xxxiii. 6.)

2. Another name of God is *El.* Both the singular and plural, El Elim, the God of gods, are used in Dan. xi. 36. and the word is left untranslated in Matt. xxvii. 46. *Eli, Eli—my God, my God.* It is commonly rendered by Junius and Tremellius, the strong or mighty God; an epithet suitable to the divine Being, (Job. ix. 4, 19. Psalm lxxxix. 8. 13.) and is one of the names of the Messiah, (Isa. ix 6.) Hillerus‡ takes this to be a part of the word Eloah, the singular of Elohim, which,

* Stockii Clavis S. Ling. p. 61. Hottingeri Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 123. Schultens in Job i. 1. Noldius, No. 1093, Alting. Dissert. 4. de plural. Elohim. p. 177.

† Schindler. Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 78.

‡ Onomastic Sacr. p. 254, 256.

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according to him, signifies the first in essence; being the first and the last, the beginning and the end, (Isa. xliv. 6. Rev. i. 8.) and is expressive of the power of God.

3. The next name of God we meet with is *Elion*, the most high, (Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20, 22.) So Christ is called *The son of the Highest*, and the Spirit, *the power of the Highest*, (Luke i. 32, 35.) and this name God has either from his habitation, the highest heavens, which is his palace and throne, and in which high and holy place he, the high and lofty One, dwells, (Isa. lvii. 15. and lxvi. 1.) or from his superiority, power and dominion over all creatures, the highest personages on earth, and the highest angels in heaven, (Psalm lxxxiii. 18, and xcvii. 9. see also Eccles. v. 8.) or from the sublimity of his nature and essence, which is beyond the reach of finite minds, and incomprehensible, (Job. xi. 7, 8.) This name was known among the Phœnicians, and is given to one of their deities, called Elioun, the most high.* It is expressive of the supremacy of God.

4. Another name of God is *Shaddai;* under which name God appeared to Abraham, (Gen. xvii. 1.) and to which reference is had, Exod. vi. 3. We translate it Almighty in those places, and in all others. It is often mentioned in the book of Job, and is well applied to him whose power is infinite and uncontrolable. Some choose to render it *sufficient*, or *all-sufficient*† God, and others render it *Nourisher;*‡ deriving it from a word which signifies *a breast.* Hillerus§ derives it from

* Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Evangel. præpar. l. 1. c. 10. p. 36.

† So Cocceius in Lex. col. 859. Jarchi in Gen. xvii 1. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 63.

‡ Paschii Dissert. de Selah, p. 2. s. 6.

§ Onomast. Sacr. p. 260, 261.

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a word which signifies to *to pour out, or shed.* Some give a very different etymology of it; deriving it from a word* which signifies to *destroy;* to which there seems to be a beautiful allusion in Isaiah xiii. 6. And others render the word the *Darter*, or *Thunderer*,† (Job vi. 4. Psalm xviii. 13, 14.) This name seems to b expressive of the all-sufficiency of God, and of the supply of his creatures from it.

5. Another of the names of God is, the *Lord*, or *God of hosts;* is first mentioned in 1 Sam. i. 3, 11. but frequently afterwards, and left untranslated in James v. 4. where the Lord is called *the Lord of Sabaoth.* It is sometimes wrongly understood; as if the same with *Lord of Sabbath*, Matt. xii. 8.—but though the words are somewhat alike in sound, they are very different in sense; for *Sabbath* signifies *rest*, and *Sabbaath hosts* or *armies.* The Lord is the God of armies on earth, a man of war, expert in it; that teacheth mens' hands to war, and their fingers to fight, and who gives success and victory on what side soever he takes. He is the Lord of the hosts of the starry heavens—the sun, moon and stars, called the host of heaven, (Gen. ii. 1. 2 Kings xxi. 3. and xxiii. 5.) So of the airy heavens; the locusts that fly there are his army, (Joel ii. 7, 11,) and the meteors, thunder and lightning, snow and hail, which are laid up by him against the day of battle and war, are the artilery he sometimes brings forth against the enemies of his people; as he did against the Egyptians and Canaanites, (Job xxxviii. 22, 23, 24, 25. Josh. x. 11.) The angels also are the militia of heaven, and called

* vastavit, Buxtorf.

† So Schmidt in Job vi. 4.

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the heavenly host, (Luke ii. 13.) The place where the angles of God met Jacob, was called from thence Mahanaim, (Gen. xxxii. 11, 12,) two hosts or armies, one going before him, and the other behind him; and they are said to *encamp* about them that fear the Lord, (Psalm xxxiv. 7.) This name is exppressive of God's dominion over all his creatures, and the several armies of them.

6. Another name of God is *Adonai*, or *Adon*, (Gen. xv. 2,) commonly rendered Lord. Hence the Spanish word *don* for *lord*. God is so called, because he is the Lord of the whole earth, (Zech. iv. 14.) Some* derive it from a word which signifies the basis, prop, or support of any thing.† God is the support of all his creatures; "he upholds all things by the word of his power;" "he upholds his saints with the right hand of his righteousness;" and even his Son as man and mediator, (Isa. xli. 10. and xlii. 1.) Some think it has the signification of a judge;‡ "God is the judge of all the earth." But perhaps, Hillerus§ is most correct in rendering it *the cause*, from which, and for which, all things are; as all things are made by the Lord, for his will, pleasure, and glory, (Rom. xi. 36. Heb. ii. 10. Rev. iv. 11.) Adon is used in the plural number of God, Mal. i. 6. and Adonai is used of the Son, as well as of the Father, (Psalm cxi. 1.) and of the holy Spirit, (Isa. vi. 8. compared with Acts xxviii. 25.)

* Paschius in Dissert. de Selah, ut supra. Alsted. Lexic. Theolog. p. 82.

† אדני foundations, bases. Job xxxviii. 6. often rendered sockets in Exodus.

‡ A דון judicavit.

§ Onomastic. Sacr. p. 258

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7. The famous name of God is *Jehovah;* a name he takes to himself and claims, (Exod. vi. 3. Isa. xlii. 8.) and it is peculiar to him. His name alone is Jehovah, which is incommunicable to another, (Psalms lxxxiii. 18.) because predicated of God, as a necessary and self-existent being. The Jews superstitiously assert it to be ineffable, and not to be pronounced, and some even declare that it should not be read or written, and therefore, substitute other names instead—as Adonai, and Elohim. This might have arisen originally, from their very great awe and reverence of this name according to Deut. xxviii. 58. but every name of God is reverend, and not to be taken in vain, nor used with any degree of levity, (Psalms cxi. 9.) It is written with four letters only; hence the Jews call it *tetragrammatom*, and it is very probably the *tetraktus* of the Pythagoreans, by which they swore. And it is remarkable, that the word for God is so written in almost all languages, denoting, it may be, that he is the God of the whole world, to be served and worshipped, in the four quarters. It includes all tenses, past, present, and future.* The words of the evangelist John are a proper periphrasis of it; *which is, and which was and which is to come*, Rev. i. 4. or, *shall be*, as in chap. xvi. 5. It comes from a root which signifies *to be*, and is expressive of the essence of God; of his necessary and self-existence, for God naturally and necessarily exists; which cannot be said of any other. Creatures owe their being to the arbitrary will of God; and so might be, or might not be, as he pleased; but God exists in and of himself. A self-existent and independent Being he must be, since he is

* Buxtorf. de Nomin. Dei, Heb. s. 10.

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before all creatures, and therefore, cannot have his being from them; and he is the cause of theirs, and, therefore, must be independent of them. And when we say he is self-existent, it must not be understood as if he made himself; for though he exist, he is not made. He is the Being of beings; all creatures have their being from him and in him, "the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that is in them." He is eminently *the Being*, and all in comparison with him are mere non-entities; *all nations*, and the inhabitants of them, *are as nothing before him; yea, less than nothing, and vanity*, (Isa. xl. 17.)

8. *Jah* is another name of God, mentioned in Psalms lxviii. 4. and cl. 6. Isa. xxvi. 4. and may be only an abbreviation or contraction of the word Jehovah. According to Cocceius,* it comes from another word, and signifies *decency*, or what is meet and becoming.

9. *Ejeh*, God gave as his name to Moses, when he sent him to the children of Israel. It is translated *I AM that I AM*, (Exod. iii. 13, 14.) and may be rendered, *I shall be what I shall be*, and what I have been. The Jews† interpret it, "I am he that was, I am he that is now, and I am he that is to come, or shall be." It seems to be of the same signification with Jehovah, and derived from the same word.

10. The names of God in the New Testament are two, κυριος and θεος, the one is usually rendered Lord and the other God. The first is derived either from κυρω, *to be*, signifying the same as Jehovah, to which it commonly answers, and denoting the essence or being of God; or from κυρος, meaning power and authority. The etymol-

* Lexic. p. 283.

† Shemot Rabba, s. 3. fol. 93. 3.

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ogy of Θεος, God, is very different; and has been derived from words variously meaning to *run*, to *heat*, to *see*, and to *fear*. The last and most probable derivation, describes God as the object of fear and reverence; who is not only to be stood in awe of by all the inhabitants of the earth, (Psalm xxxiii. 8.) but more especially is to be feared with a godly fear by his saints, (Psal. lxxxvii. 7. Heb. xii. 28.)

From all these names of God we learn that He is the eternal, immutable, and almighty Being, the Being of beings, self-existent, and self-sufficient, and the object of religious worship and adoration.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NATURE OF GOD.

The nature that belongs to every creature is difficult to understand, and that which belongs to God, the Creator, is most difficult of all. That *Nature* may be predicated of God, the apostle suggests when he says, the Gallatians, before conversion, served those who, *by nature, were no gods*, (Gal. 4. 8.) which implies that one existed who was, by Nature, God, though the idols they had worshiped were not. Mention is also made of the *divine Nature*, (2 Pet. i. 4.) which is infused and implanted in men in regeneration; so called, not only because it is from God, as its author, but because it is the image of him, and bears a likeness, and resemblance to him. But there must be a nature in him to which this

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is similar, being "created after him, in righteousness and true holiness;" or there would be no propriety in denominating it from him. This is what is called Divinity Deity, or Godhead; which must not be thought to be "like to gold, silver, or stone, graven by art, or man's device;" or to be in the similitude of any creature, but which "in all its perfection and fullness, dwells bodily in Christ, (Acts xvii. 29. Rom. i. 20. Col. ii. 9.) It is the same as the *form of God*, in which Christ is said to be, (Phil. ii. 6.) meaning not any external form, for God has no visible shape, but internal glory, excellency, nature, and perfections, in which "Christ is equal with him, and his fellow;" and is not only the express image of him, but one with him, not merely of a like, but of the same nature; so that he that sees the one, sees the other. Essence, which is the same thing with nature, is ascribed to God. He is said to be *excellent in essence*, (Isa. xxviii. 29.) for so the words may be rendered, that is, he has the most excellent essence or being. His names, *Jehovah*, and *I am that I am*, are expressive of his essence or being, as has been observed. This essence, with respect to God, like his *face*, cannot be seen, (Exod. xxxiii. 20, 23.) that is, perceived, understood, and fully comprehended, especially in the present state. For it is impossible for a finite mind, in its most exalted state, to comprehend the infinite Nature and Being of God, though in the future state, saints will behold the face of God, and "see him face to face, and as he is."

This nature is common to the three Persons in God, but not communicated from one to another; they each partake of it, and possess it as one undivided nature. It is not that a part of it that is enjoyed by one, and a

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part by another, but the whole by each. As "all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ," so in the holy Spirit, and in the Father, undoubtedly. These equally subsist in the unity of the divine essence, and that without any derivation or communication of it from one to another. It is represented by some, who, otherwise are sound in the doctrine of the Trinity, that the divine nature is communicated from the Father to the Son and Spirit, and that he is *fons Deitatis*, "the fountain of Deity." These are at least unsafe terms, as they seem to imply priority in the Father to the other two persons; for he that communicates must, at least in order of nature, and according to our conception of things, be prior to him to whom the communication is made; and they imply that he has a superabundant plenitude of Deity in him, previous to this communication. It is better to say, that they are self-existent, and exist together in the same undivided essence; jointly, equally, possess the same nature, one as early as the other.

The nature of God is, indeed, incomprehensible by us. Somewhat of it may be apprehended, but it cannot be fully comprehended. *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?* (Job xi. 7.) No; but then this does not forbid our searching and inquiring after him; though we cannot have adequate ideas of God, yet we should endeavour to get the best we can, and frame the best conceptions of him we are able; that so we may serve, worship, honour and glorify him in the best manner. *The world*, the heathen world, even the wisest in it *by wisdom knew not God*, (1 Cor. i. 21.) A heathen philosopher* being

* Simonides apud Cicero, de Natura Deor. l 1.

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asked the question, What is God? required a day to think of it. When that day was out, he asked a second, and still more time; and a reason for his dilatoriness being demanded, he replied, that the longer he considred the questien, the more obscure it became to him.

We are, in our conceptions of God, to remove every thing from him that is corporeal; for spirit, and body or flesh, are opposed to one another, (Isa. xxxi. 3. Luke xxiv. 39.) yet there have been some, both ancient and modern, atheistically inclined, who have asserted, that matter is God, and God is universal matter; that the whole universe is God, and that extension is one of his attributes. A sort of people called Anthropomorhites, who bore the Christian name, ascribed a human body, and its parts to God in a proper sense, mistaking some passages of Scripture; and the common people, among the papists, have no other notion of God, than that of a grave old man. In this respect both Jews and Heathen have better notions. Of the Jews, R. Joseph Albo,* Maimonides,† and others, deny that God is a body, or consists of bodily parts; and of heathen, Pythagoras,‡ Xenophanes,§ Sallustus,‖ and others,¶ affirm God to be incorporeal; and the Stoics say, he has not a human form.** If God was matter, which is inert, inactive and motionless, he could not be the maker and mover of all things, as he is; *for in him we live, and move, and have*

* Sepher Ikkarim, l. 2. c. 6.
† Hilchot Yesude Hatorah, c. 1. s. 5, 6.
‡ Apud Lactant. de Ira, c. 11.
§ Apud Clement. Stromat. 5. p. 601.
‖ De Diis et Mundo, c. 2.
¶ So Aristotle, Laert. l. 5, in Vita ejus.
** Laert. l. 7. in Vita Zeno.

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our being, (Acts xvii. 28.) Matter is without consciousness, understanding, wisdom, and knowledge; and is incapable of doing such works as require contrivance, skill, wisdom, and knowledge, as the works of creation and providence. Therefore, if God was matter, he could not be the Creator and Governor of the world; nor if a body, could he be omnipresent.

It is no objection to this, that the parts of a human body are sometimes attributed to God, for these are to be understood in figurative sense, denoting some act or attribute. Thus his *face* denotes his sight and presence, in which all things are, (Gen. xix. 13.) sometimes his favor and good will, and the manifestations of his love and grace, (Psal. xxvii. 8. and lxxx. 3.) and sometimes his wrath and indignation against wicked men, (Psal. xxxiv. 16. Rev. vi. 17.) His *eyes* signify his omniscence and all-seeing providence. His *ears*, his readiness to attend unto, and answer the requests of his people, (Psal. xxxiv. 15. Isa. lix. 1.) His *nose* and *nostrils*, has acceptance of the persons and sacrifices of men, (Gen. viii. 21.) or his disgust at anger with, and non-acceptance of them, (Deut. xxix 20. Isa. lxv. 5. Psal. xviii. 8.) His *mouth* is expressive of his commands, promises, threatenings, and prophecies, (Lam. iii. 29. Isa. i. 20. Jer. xxiii. 16.) His *arms* and *hands* signify his power, and the exertion of it as in making the heavens and the earth, (Psal. cii. 27. Job xxvi. 13. Psal. lxxxix. 13. and cxviii. 16. Deut. xxxiii. 27.)

Nor is it any proof of corporeity in God, that a divine person has sometimes appeared in a human form, as one of the men that came to Abraham, in the plains of Mamre was no other than the Lord omniscent and

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omnipotent, (Gen. xviii. 3.) The man who wrestled with Jacob was a divine person, of which Jacob was sensible, and therefore, called the place *Peniel*, the face of God, (Gen. xxxii. 24, 30.) So was he who appeared to Manoah, and his wife, (Judg. xiii. 6, 10, 18.) But these were appearances of the Son of God in a human form, and were presages of his future incarnation; for as to the Father, no man ever saw his shape, (John v. 37.) It may be that the parts of the human body are so often ascribed to God, on account of Christ's incarnation; to prepare the minds of men, to inure them to ideas of it, to raise their expectation of it, and strengthen their faith in it, since these attributions were frequent before the coming of Christ in the flesh, and very rarely used afterwards.

Nor will the formation of man in the image, and after the likeness of God, afford a sufficient argument to prove that there is something corporeal in God, for in man's soul or spirit, this image and likeness principally lay; which was originally created in righteousness and holiness, in wisdom and knowledge. And though he has a body also; yet inasmuch as a body was prepared in the council and covenant of grace, from eternity, for the Son of God to assume in time; and in the book of God's eternal purposes, *all the members* of it *were written; which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them*, (Heb. x. 5. Psal. cxxxix. 16.) God might, according to the idea of it in his eternal mind, form the body of the first man.

The description of God, as a Spirit, teaches us to ascribe to God in a more eminent manner, and to consider as transcendent and infinite in him all the excellen-

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cies to be found in spirits. By spirits we understand not subtilized bodies, but rational spirits, angles, and the souls of men, (Zech. vi. 5. Heb. i. 13. Job xxxii. 8. Heb. xii. 23.) God, an uncreated spirit, is the Creator of all others, and therefore said to be, "the Father of spirits," (Heb. xii. 9.) These are creatures of time, finite beings, and were made since the world was; but God is an eternal and infinite Spirit, from everlasting to everlasting; whom "the heaven of heavens cannot contain."

There are some excellencies in created spirits, which may lead more easily to a conception of God, and his divine nature.

Spirits are immaterial, having no corporal parts, as flesh, blood and bones, (Luke xxiv. 39.) and incorruptible, having no matter about them liable to corruption. They are, indeed, capable of moral corruption, as appears from the angels that sinned, and from the depravity of the souls of men by the fall. But God is not subject to corruption in any sense, and is, therefore, called the *incorruptible God*, (Rom. i. 23.) Spirits are immortal. Angels die not, (Luke xx. 36.) and the souls of men cannot be killed, (Matt. x. 28.) It is one of the characters of God, that he is *immortal*, yea, *only hath immortality;* and so more transcendently, and in a more eminent manner immortal than angels, and the souls of men; having it of himself, and underivatively, and being the giver of it to others, (1 Tim. i. 17. and vi. 16.) Spirits are invisible. Whenever they have made themselves visible, it has been by assuming a form. "God is invisible, and dwells in light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see," (1 Tim. i. 17. and vi. 16.)

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None can tell the color, form, figure, shape and size of the soul of man, nor can any describe the form and figure of an angel. Pictures, paintings, and sculptures of them, are the fruit of mere fancy and immagination, and are at most but emblematical. Because angels have appeared in a human form, therefore they are painted as such, and because of their quick dispatch, and swiftness, as messengers, wings are given them; but never was such a creature in real being, or ever seen in the whole world, in any age, as a young man or woman with wings at the shoulders. So no likeness can be formed of God; no similitude was ever seen of him, and to whom can he be likened and compared? (Deut. iv. 1 2. Isa. 18, and xlvi. 5.) Some of the Heathen* have acknowledged the invisibility of God, as a Spirit; and Aristotle† argues the invisibility of God, from the invisibility of the soul of man.

But besides these properties, there are others still more excellent in spirits, by which they approach nearer to God, bear a greater resemblance to him, and serve to give us clearer ideas of his nature. They are living, active, endowed with understanding, will, and affections.

God is the living God, has life in and of himself, and gives life to all creatures. Spirits are active, and operate upon others; God is all act, *actus simplicissimus*, the most simple act, as he is sometimes styled. There is nothing passive in him, as matter, to be wrought upon. He works, and "all creatures live and move, and have their being in him," (John v. 17. Acts xvii. 28.) Spirits,

* Philemon et Orpheus apud Justin. de Monarch. p. 104, 105.

† De Mundo, c. 6. so Minutius Felix, in octavio, p. 35, 36.

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angels, and the souls of men, are intelligent beings, having a faculty of understanding. The understanding of God is infinite. There is no searching it. He understands himself, and all created beings, and their natures, (Psal. cxlvii. 6. Isa. xl. 28.) Spirits have the power of willing. They are voluntary agents. God wills whatever he does, and does whatever he wills. His will is boundless, uncontrolable and sovereign, (Psal. cxv. 3. Dan. iv. 35.) Spirits have the affections of love, mercy, piety, &c. God not only loves his creatures, but "is love itself," (1 John iv. 16.) "His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear him;" and he pities them as a father pities his children, (Psal. ciii. 13, 17.)

God being a Spirit, we learn that he is a simple* and uncompounded Being, not consisting of parts, as a body does. His spirituality involves his simplicity. Some consider this and his spirituality also, as attributes of God. Indeed, every attribute of God, is God himself—his nature. And all the attributes are only so many ways of considering his nature, or are so many displays of it. However, it is certain God is not composed of parts in any sense; not in a *physical* sense, of essential parts, as matter and form, of which bodies consist; nor of integral parts, as soul and body, of which men consist; nor in a *metaphysical* sense, as of essence and existence, of act and power; nor in a *logical* sense, as of kind and difference, substance and accident—either of which would argue imperfection, weakness, and mutability. If God were composed of parts he would not

* Is simple, and least of all departs from his own idea,—remains always simply in his owr form, Plato de Republ. l. 2.

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be *eternal*, and absolutely the first Being, since the composing parts would, at least, co-exist with him. The composing parts, in our conception of them, would be prior to the compositum; as the body and soul of man, of which he is composed, are prior to his being a man; and there must be a composer to put the parts together, who must be before what is composed. Nor would he be *infinite* and *immense;* for either these parts are finite, or infinite; if finite, they can never compose an infinite Being; and if infinite, there must be more infinites than one, which implies a contradiction. Nor would he be *independent;* for what is composed of parts, depends upon those parts, and the union of them, by which it is preserved. Nor would he be *immutable*, unalterable, and immortal; since what consists of parts, and depends upon the union of them, is liable to be resolved into those parts again, and so dissolved and destroyed.

The simplicity of God is not to be disproved by the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead; for though there are three distinct persons, there is but one nature and essence common to them all, which is not parted and divided among them, but is jointly and equally possessed. Nor do these persons really differ from the divine nature and essence, nor from one another, except by their distinct modes of subsisting; so that they only distinguish and modify, but neither divide nor compose the divine nature. Nor is it to be disproved by the decrees of God. The decrees of God are within himself, and as whatever is in God, is God, and so are no other than God himself, may be said as to the act of decreeing, yet not with respect to the things decreed; and though the latter are many and various, as to their objects, yet they are not

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so in God, who, by one eternal act, in his infinite mind, has decreed every thing that has been, is, or shall be. This is what Plato* means by *one* and *many* in God; one, as to his essence; many, as to the ideas and decrees in it, which many are one. Nor is it to be disproved by the attributes of God; for they are no other than God himself, and differ neither from one another, (except with respect to their objects and effects, and in our manner of conception of them,) nor from the nature and essence of God—they are himself—his nature. And he is not only eternal, wise, good, loving, &c., but he is eternity itself, wisdom itself, goodness itself, love itself, &c.; and these are not parts of his nature, but displays of the same undivided nature—different considerations in which we view it. Our minds being so weak as not to be able to conceive of God at once and together, take one thing after another, and the same in different lights, that we may better understand them. These several things, called attributes, which are one in God, are predicated of him, and ascribed to him distinctly, for helps to our finite understandings, and for the relief of our minds; and that we, with more facility and ease, may conceive of the nature of God. As a learned Jew† observes, all those attributes are only intellectual notions; by which are conceived the perfections that are in the essence of God, but in reality are nothing but his essence.

* In Philebo, p. 372, &c. et in Parmenide, p. 1110, &c.
† R. Joseph Albo in Sepher Ikkarim, l. 2. c. 8.

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CHAPTER V.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD IN GENERAL. HIS IMMUTABILITY.

The attributes of God are variously distinguished by divines. Some distinguish them into *negative* and *positive*, or affirmative. The negative are such as remove from him whatever is imperfect in creatures. Such are infinity, immutability, immortality, which deny him to be finite, mutable and mortal; and, indeed, it is easier to discern what God is not, than what he is. The positive, or affirmative, are such as assert some perfection in God, which is in and of himself; and which in creatures, in any measure, is derived from him, as wisdom, goodness, justice, holiness. But the distinction is discarded by others, because in all negative attributes some positive excellency is found.

Some distribute them into a *two-fold order*, first and second. Attributes, or essential properties of the *first order*, declare the essence of God as in himself—such as his simplicity and perfection, infinity and immutability. Those of the *second order*, which though primarily, properly, naturally, infinitely, and in a more excellent manner are in God than in creatures; yet, are in creatures secondarily, and in an analogical sense, there being some similitude of them, of which there is none of the former order. These are said to be life and immortality, blessedness and glory. Again, some are said to be *absolute*, and others *relative*. The absolute are such as eternally agree with the essence of God, without

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respect to his creatures, and are expressed by his names, Jehovah, Jah, &c. Relative ones are such as agree with him in time, with some certain respect to his creatures, and are expressed by his being their Creator, Governor, Preserver, Redeemer, &c. Some are called *proper*, as those before mentioned; and others *figurative*, signified by the parts of the human body, and the affections of the mind, as observed in the preceding chapter. But the more commonly received distinction of the attributes of God, is that of the *communicable* and *incommunicable*. The incommunicable attributes of God are such as there is no appearance or shadow of in creatures; as independence, immutability, immensity, and eternity. The communicable are such as are common to God with men, or at least of which there is some resemblance in men; as goodness, holiness, justice and wisdom. Yet of these latter it may be said that as they are in God, they are incommunicable, for in him they are infinite, and cannot, as such, be communicated to finite creatures. None but God is essentially, originally, underivatively, perfectly and infinitely good, holy, just and wise.

But as God is defined a *Spirit* in Scripture, as has been observed, it will be most proper to class the perfections and attributes of God in agreement therewith. With respect to his nature, as an uncreated Spirit, may be referred, besides his spirituality and simplicity, already considered, his immutability and infinity, which includes his immensity, or omnipresence and eternity; and with respect to it as active and operative, the life of God and his omnipotence. With respect to the faculties, as of a rational spirit, may be noticed the *understanding*, to which may belong, his omniscience and manifold wis-

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dom; and the *will*, under which may be considered its acts and sovereignty; and the *affections*, to which may be reduced, the love, grace, mercy, hatred, anger, patience, and long suffering of God. And lastly, under the notions of qualities and virtues, may be considered, his goodness, holiness, justice, truth, and faithfulness; and, as the complement of the whole, his perfection or all-sufficiency, glory, and blessedness, and following this order, we consider first,

The *Immutability* of God; which arises from, and is closely connected with his spirituality and simplicity, or what is necessary to him as a spiritual, simple and uncompounded Being.*

Immutability is an attribute which God claims, and challenges as peculiar to himself; *I am the Lord, I change not*, (Mal. iii. 6.) Mutability belongs to creatures, immutability to God alone. The heavens and the earth, which he has made, are not always the same; but "he is the same forever." The visible heavens are often changing; sometimes serene and clear, at others, covered with clouds and darkness. The face of the earth appears different at the various seasons of the year. It has undergone one great change by a flood, and will undergo another by fire; when that, and *the works that are therein, shall be burnt up; and the heavens, being on fire shall be dissolved; and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;* and *new heavens*, and *a new earth* shall succeed, (2 Pet. iii. 10, 12, 13.) *All of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end*, (Psal. cii. 25, 26, 27.)

* Aristot. de Cœlo, l. 1. c. 9. Sallust. de Diis, c 1, 2.

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The sun in the firmament, that great luminary, and fountain of light and heat, in allusion to which, God is called *the Father of lights*, has its various appearances, its risings and settings; is sometimes under clouds, in eclipse and casts shades on the earth; but with God there is *no variableness nor shadow of turning*. The inhabitants of heaven and earth are changeable, even the most excellent. Angels in their original nature and state, were subject to change, as the apostacy of many of them who have changed both state and place has shown. They *kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation*. For sinning against God, they were hurled out of heaven and *cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment*, (Jude v. 6. 2 Pet. ii. 4.) The angels which stood when the rest fell, are now indeed become impeccable, and are firmly settled in their state of integrity; but this is owing not to their own nature, but to the electing grace of God, in Christ, and to the confirming grace of Christ, their head who is the head of all principality and power, (1 Tim. v. 21. Col. ii. 10.) Man at his best estate, his estate of innocence, and integrity, was altogether vanity; for though not sinful, yet being mutable, and left to the mutability of his will, which was his vanity, when tempted he fell into sin; though made upright, lost the rectitude of his nature; though made after the image of God, soon came short of that glory; though he had dominion over the creatures, being in honor, he abode not long, but became like those he had the power over; though placed in the most delightful and fruitful spot in all the globe, yet, rebelling against his Maker and Benefactor, was driven out from thence by him; and is now

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a creature subject to innumerable changes in life. Diseases of various kinds seize his body, and change his beauty and strength, and death at last turns him to corruption and dust. He, like the changeable grass of the field, flourishes a while, is then cut down and withers away. But God and his word endure forever the same, (Pet. i. 24, 25.) Good men are very mutable in spiritual affairs; in the frames of their minds, in the affections of their souls, in the exercise of grace, in their devotion and obedience to God. Job, in his estate, in his family, and in his health and friends, might well say, *changes and war are against me*, (Job x. 17.) and at length he came to his great and last change, death as all men must, even the best. In the future state, it is true, good men will be no more subject to change; but their spirits made perfect, will neither sin nor sorrow more; and their bodies, when raised, will remain immortal, incorruptable, spiritual, powerful, and glorious. But this will be owing, not to themselves, but to the unchangeable grace and power of God. God only is in and of himself immutable; and he is unchangeable in his nature, perfections, and purposes, in his love and affections to his people, in his covenant, and even in his threatenings.

1. God is immutable in his nature and essence, being *simple*, and devoid of all composition, as has been proved. The more simple and free from mixture and composition any thing is, the less subject it is to change. Spirits, being uncompounded, and not consisting of parts, are not so changeable as bodies; and God, being an infinite and uncreated Spirit, and free from composition in every sense, is entirely and perfectly immutable.

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As he is *eternal*, there can be no change of time with him. Time belongs only to a creature, is the measure of its duration, and began when a creature began to be, and not before. Though he is *the ancient days*, he does not become older. He is no older now than millions of ages ago. His eternity is an everlasting and unchangeable *now*. *Infinite*, *immense*, and *omnipresent*, there can be no change of place with him, for he *fills heaven and earth* with his presence; he is every where, and cannot change or move from place to place. When he is said to *come down* on earth, or to *depart* from men, local motion or change of place is not to be understood, but some uncommon exertion of his power and demonstration of his presence. God is the *most perfect* Being, and, therefore, can admit of no change of his nature, neither of increase nor decrease, of addition nor diminution. If he changes, it must be either for the better or worse; if for the better, then he was imperfect before, and so not God; if for the worse, then he becomes imperfect. A similar reasoning is used by Plato,* and by another ancient philosopher,† who asserts that God is good, impassible and unchangeable; for whatsoever is changed, says he, is either for the better or the worse; if for the worse, it becomes bad; and if for the better, it was bad at first. Or if he changes from an infinitely perfect state, to another equally so, then there must be more infinites than one, which is a contradiction.

Nor is the immutability of the divine nature to be disproved from creation as it is suggested that God,

* De Republica, l. 2.

† Sallustius de Diis et Mundo, c. 1.

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from a non-agent, became an agent, and acquired a new relation—that of a Creator, from whence mutability is argued. But it should be observed, that God had from all eternity the same creative power, and would have had if he had never created any thing; and when he put it forth in time, it was according to his unchangeable will in eternity, and produced no change in him. The change was in the created, not the Maker; and though a relation results from hence, which is real in creatures, it is only nominal in the Creator, and makes no change in his nature.

Nor is the unchangeablness of the divine nature to be disproved by the incarnation of Christ; for though he, a divine Person, possessed of the divine nature, was *made flesh*, or became man, the divine nature in him was not changed into the human nature, nor the human nature into the divine, nor a third nature made out of them both. For as it has been commonly said, "Christ remained what he was, and assumed what he was not;" and what he assumed added nothing to his divine person; he was only *manifest in the flesh*. He neither received any perfection, nor imperfection, from the human nature; though that received dignity and honor by its union to him, was adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit without measure, and is now advanced at the right hand of God. Nor was any change made in the divine nature by the sufferings of Christ. The divine nature is impassible; which is a reason why Christ assumed the human nature, that he might be capable of suffering and dying in the room and stead of his people. And though the Lord of life and glory was crucified, and God purchased the church with his own blood,

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and the blood of Christ is called the blood of the Son of God; yet he was crucified in the human nature only, and his blood was shed in that, to which the divine person gave virtue and efficacy, through its union to it.

2. God is unchangeable in his perfections or attributes. Thus, for instance, he is the same in his *power* as ever. That has been displayed in various instances, in creation, providence, &c., but is not exhausted, nor in the least diminished. His *knowledge* is the same, and his *understanding is infinite*, and it can be neither increased nor lessened. The knowledge of angels and men increases gradually; but He knows no more now than he did from all eternity. He knows and sees all things together, and at once, in his vast eternal mind, and not one thing after another, as they appear in time; things past, present, and to come, are all beheld by him in one view; that is, which are so with respect to creatures, for with him there is no such consideration. His *goodness*, grace, and mercy, are immutable. Though there has been such a profusion of his goodness to his creatures, and so many good and perfect gifts have been bestowed on them, it is still the same in him, without any abatement; he is abundant in it, and it endures continually the same. And so, likewise, is his grace, which has been exceedingly abundant; he is as gracious and merciful as ever; "his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, to them that fear him;" and his *faithfulness* he never suffers to fail; even though men believe not, he abides faithful. And the unbelief of men cannot make the faith or faithfulness of God without effect. And as he is *glorious* in *holiness*, that perfection never receives any tarnish, can never be sullied, but is always illustriously the same.

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There is no unrighteousness in God, he cannot change from holiness to unholiness, from righteousness to unrighteousness; he is the just one, that neither can nor will do iniquity; and so he is unchangeably good, and unchangeably happy, and immutable in every perfection.

3. God is unchangeable in his purposes and decrees. There is a purpose for every thing, and a time for that purpose; God has determined all that ever was, is or shall be; all come to pass according to the counsel of his will, and all his decrees are unchangeable. They are like the laws of the Medes and Persians, and more unalterable. They are the mountains of brass Zechariah saw in a vision, from whence proceed the providences of God, and their executioners, (Zech. vi. 1.) Immutability is expressly spoken of the counsel of God, (Heb. vi. 17.) The purposes of God are always carried into execution, and never frustrated. It is not the power of men and devils to disannul them. Whatever devices and counter-workings to them may be framed and formed, they are of no avail; "the counsel of the Lord stands forever," (Psal. xxxiii. 11. Prov. xix. 21. and xxi. 30. Is. xiv. 24, 27. and xlvi. 10.) The purposes of God are *within* himself, (Eph. i. 9,) and what is in himself, is himself, and he can as soon cease to be as to alter his mind, or change his counsels. And they are *eternal*, (Eph. iii. 11.) No new thoughts arise in his mind, no new resolutions are formed in his breast, no new decrees are made by him; his counsels are *of old*. His purposes are called *counsels*, because human designs wisely formed are made with consultation, and upon mature deliberation. Being *all-knowing*, he sees and

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declares the end from the beginning, and nothing unforeseen ever can appear to hinder the execution of his intentions and determinations; which is sometimes the case with men. And he is *faithful* to himself, his purposes and decrees; his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; or are truly and faithfully performed.

The immutability of the decrees of God cannot be disproved by his providences, which are many and various, unsearchable and past finding out, and may seem to differ from, and clash with one another; for all the changes in providence, whether with respect to the world in general, or with respect to individuals, are according to his unchangeable will. Job was a remarkable instance of changes in providence, and yet he was fully persuaded of the unchangeable will of God in them. *He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doth; for he performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him*, (Job xxii. 13, 14.)

Nor is it to be disproved by the different declarations of the will of God as to the observances and duties in the different dispensations of the Law and Gospel. God, by Moses, ordered the children of Israel to observe certain laws, rites and ceremonies, until the time of reformation, and then they were disannulled and laid aside as useless, and other ordinances were fixed, to remain till Christ's second coming. But the delivery, time of continuance and abolition of the first, and the settling of the other to remain to the end of the world, were according to the unchangeable will of God.

Nor is prayer any objection to the immutability of the divine will, which is not to be altered by it. When

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the mind of God is not towards a people to do them good, it cannot be turned to them by the most fervent and importunate prayers of those who have the greatest interest in him, (Jer. xv. 1.) and when he bestows blessings on a praying people, it is not for the sake of their prayers, as if he was inclined and turned by them; but it is for his own sake, and of his own sovereign will and pleasure. Should it be said, to what purpose then is prayer? it is answered, this is the way and means God has appointed, for the communication of the blessing of his goodness to his people. For though he has purposed, provided, and promised them, yet he will be sought unto, to give them, and it is a duty and privilege to ask. When they are blessed with a spirit of prayer, it forebodes well, and looks as if God intended to bestow the good things asked, which should be asked always with submission to the will of God, saying, *not my will but thine be done.*

4. God is unchangeable in his love and affections to his people; "his love to them is from everlasting to everlasting," without any variation in his own heart, however different the manifestations of it to them may be. He ever rests in his love, and never alters; nothing can separate from it, he is love itself, and it is as unchangeable as himself, *the same to day, yesterday, and forever.* The fall made no difference in it, though the special objects fell with Adam, in his transgression, into the depths of sin and misery. God continued his love, manifested it in sending his Son to be the propitiation for their sins, commended it, and gave a full proof and demonstration of it, in the delivery of Christ to death for them, even while they were yet sinners. Nor does

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the sinful state and condition they were brought nto, and continue in from their birth to their conversion, make any alteration in his love; but notwithstanding that, for the great love with which he loves them, he "quickens them when dead in trespasses and sins." Nor do the hidings of God's face from them after conversion, prove any change in his love to them, for though he hides his face from them and forsakes them for a moment, in a little seeming wrath, to show his resentment at their sins, to humble them before him, and to cause them to seek his face and favor; yet with great mercies he gathers them again to himself, in the most tender manner, and with loving kindness, has mercy on them; and, for the strengthening of their faith in his love, swears he will not be wroth with them; and declares his loving kindness to be more immoveable than hills and mountains. (Isa. liv. 7—10.) Afflictions are no evidence of a change of affection. Though he may thoroughly chastise them, yet he deals with them but as children, and, like Ephraim, they are his dear sons and daughters, and pleasant children in whom he takes the utmost complacency and delight. God's rebukes are rebukes in love, and not in wrath and hot displeasure; though he visits their transgressions with a rod and stripes, he does not utterly, nor at all, take away his loving kindness in Christ from them. (Jer. xxxi. 18, 20. Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8. Rev. iii. 19. Psal. lxxxix. 32, 33.) There is no inconsistency in that he is said to be angry with them, and again to turn away his anger from them, (Isa, xii. 1.) for anger is not opposite to love. Jacob was angry with his beloved Rachel, and a father may be angry with his beloved child, and love him not the less. Wrath and hatred

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are opposed to love, which are never in the heart of God towards his beloved ones. Moreover, this is said after the manner of men, and according to our apprehension of things. When God frowns in his providence, and deserts his people for a while, they judge he is angry, when it only shows his displeasure at their sins, and not at their persons; and then, when he smiles upon them again, and manifests his pardoning grace and mercy, they conclude he has turned himself from the fierceness of his anger. (Psalm lxxxv. 2, 3.)

5. God is unchangeable in his covenant of grace. This was made with Christ from everlasting, and stands fast with him; it is as immoveable as a rock, and can never be broken. Its blessings are *sure mercies*, according to his unchangeable will, and he never revokes them. Such as are blessed with them are always blessed, and it is not in the power of men and devils to reverse them. (Rom. xi. 29, and viii. 30.) The promises of the covenant, which are gone out of his mouth and lips are unalterable. "All the promises are yea and amen in Christ." God is unchangeable in his threatenings. He watches to bring the evil he has threatened, as well as the good he has promised; and he performs the one as surely as the other, (Dan. ix. 14. see Isa. i 20. Jer. xxiii. 20.)

Nor is the unchangeableness of God in his word, whether in a way of promise or threatening, to be disproved by the repentance ascribed to him, which is to be taken in a limited sense, for in some sense it is absolutely denied of him. (Numb. xxiii. 19. 1 Sam. xv. 29.) When it is spoken of him, it is to be understood improperly and figuratively, after the manner of men, he

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doing as men do when they repent, that is, undo what they have done. As a potter, dissatisfied with a vessel he has made, breaks it to pieces; so when it repented God that he had made man on earth, (Gen. vi. 6.) and again that he had made Saul king, (1 Sam. xv. 11.) he destroyed man from off the earth and took away the kingdom from Saul and his family, and gave it to another, in which he changed not his mind, but his operations and providences, and that according to his unchangeable will.

Nor is the immutability of God, in his promises and threatenings, affected in that the promised good and threatened evil are not always done. For it should be considered, that they are either absolute or conditional. That any thing promised or threatened, absolutely and unconditionally, is not performed, must be denied. In all cases where God does not what he said he would do, a condition is either expressed or implied. (see Jer. xviii. 8, 9, 10.) Thus God promised that he would dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem, in the temple, and there should be his *rest forever*, (Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14.) and the people of Israel should dwell in their land, and eat the good of it; but then it was provided they were obdient to God, abode in his service and worship, and kept his laws and ordinances. (Isa. i. 19.) But they failing on their part, he departed from them, and suffered them to be carried away captive. There was a change of his dispensations, but none of his will. He threatened the Ninevites with the destruction of their city within forty days, that is, unless they repented. They did repent, and were saved from ruin, God repenting of what he had threatened; which, though a change

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in his outward conduct towards them, was no change of his will; for both their repentance and their deliverance were according to his unchangeable will. (Jonah iii. 4, 10.) In the case of Hezekiah, the outward declaration ordered to be made to him, was, that he should *die and not live*, as he must have done quickly, according to the nature of second causes, his disease being mortal; but the secret will of God was that he should live *fifteen years* longer, as he did; which implies neither contradiction nor change. The outward declaration was made to humble Hezekiah, to induce him to pray, and make use of means; whereby the unchangeable will of God was accomplished.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INFINITY, OMNIPRESENCE, AND ETERNITY OF GOD

The word infinite, when applied to God, means unbounded, unlimited, unmeasurable, unsearchable and incomprehensible. This attribute chiefly respects and includes the *omnipresence* and *eternity* of God. These are its two branches. Not bounded by space, he is every where; nor by time, he is eternal.* That he is in this sense infinite, appears from his spirituality and simplicity, before established. There are, however, finite created spirits, as angels, and the souls of men; and these have a beginning although owing not to

* Aristot. de Cœlo, l. 1. c. 9.

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themselves, but to the power of God that supports them in being, they will have no end. He could annihilate them, and they are definitively in some place, and so, on all accounts, finite. But God was before all time, and so not bounded by it, before space or place were he existed without them, and, therefore, not limited to or by them. Immutability, which we have already established, infers both omnipresence and eternity, the two branches of infinity. We commonly say that sin is infinite, and the best reason that can be given is that God is the object of it. For as an act, it is finite, being the act of a finite creature; but with respect to the object against whom it is committed, it is infinite, and requires an infinite satisfaction; which none but an infinite person can give. Christ, in his divine nature, is such a person, and so gave an infinite value and virtue to his sufferings and death, whereby justice had from them an infinite satisfaction.

God is infinite in all his attributes; which are indeed himself, his nature, as has been observed, and are seperately considered by us, as a relief to our minds, and helps to our better understanding it; and, perhaps, by observing some of these distinctly, we may have a clearer idea of the infinity of God. His *understanding* is infinite, as is expressly said, (Psalm cxlvii. 5.) and it reaches to, and comprehends all things. The same may be said of his knowledge and wisdom, there is a *depth*, the apostle ascribes to both; and which is not to be sounded by mortals, (Rom. xi. 33.) The *power* of God is infinite. With him nothing is impossible. His power has never been exerted to the uttermost. He that has made one world, could have made millions;

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and his making of one proves his *eternal power*, that is, his infinite power; for nothing but infinite power could ever have made a world out of nothing. (Rom. i. 20. Heb. xi. 3.) His *goodness* is infinite. The earth is full of it, all creatures partake of it, and it endures continually. Though there has been such a vast profusion of it from the beginning of the world, through all ages, it still abounds. There is no end of it, it is infinite, it is boundless; nor can there be any addition to it; it is infinitely perfect, *my goodness extends not to thee.* (Psal. xvi. ii.) God is infinite in his *purity*, *holiness*, and *justice.* In comparison with him, the most holy creatures are impure, and cover themselves before him. (Job iv. 17, 18. Isia. vi. 2, 3.) In short, he is infinitely perfect, and infinitely blessed and happy. We rightly give him the titles and epithets of *immense* and *incomprehensible*, which belong to his infinity. He is *immense*, that is, unmeasurable; he measures all things, but is measured by none; who can take his dimensions? they are as *high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?* His immensity is his magnitude, and of his *greatness* it is said, that it is *unsearchable*, (Psalm cxlv. 3.) and therefore, must be *incomprehensible.* It not only cannot be comprehended and circumscribed by space, or in place, *for the heaven of heavens cannot contain* him; but he is not to be comprehended by finite minds, that cannot conceive of him as he is; his omniscience is *too wonderful* for them and *the thunder of his power who can understand?* Somewhat of him may be apprehended, but his nature and essence can never be comprehended, no not in a state of perfection. Sooner may all the waters of the ocean be put into a nut-

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shell, than that the infinite Being of God should be comprehended by angels or men, who are finite creatures. Infinity is an attribute peculiar to God, and, as has been observed, its two chief branches are *omnipresence* and *eternity;* which will be next considered.

1. The *Omnipresence* of God, or his ubiquity, as it is included in his infinity, is a branch of and strictly connected with it, must be strongly concluded from it. For if God is infinite, that is, unbounded with respect to space and place, then he must be everywhere. And this is to be proved from his power, which is everywhere; as appears, not only in the creation of all things, as the heaven, and the earth, and all that is in them; but in his providence, supporting and sustaining them. Not only the creatures have their being in him, and from him, and therefore, he must be near them; but "he upholds all things by his power," which is the argument the apostle uses to prove that he is not far from them, (Acts xvii. 27, 28.)

And he is everywhere by his knowledge, all things are naked and open to him, all are before him, and he present with them. As these attributes of power, wisdom, and knowledge, are no other than his nature, or than himself, he must be everywhere by his essence. This is clear from the omnipresence of the divine nature in Christ, who, as a divine person, was in heaven, when as man, he was here upon earth. (John i. 18. and iii. 13.) Indeed, unless he was omnipresent, he could not be in whatsoever place two or three are gathered together in his name, or be in the midst of the candlesticks, the churches, or with his ministers, to the end of the world. (Matt. xviii. 20. and xxviii. 29.) Now if God considered per-

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sonally or in any one of the divine Persons, is omnipresent, then God, essentially considered, must be so.

The presence of God may be considered in different ways. There is his glorious presence in heaven, where in a most eminent manner, he displays the glory of his majesty to angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. There is his powerful and providential presence with all his creatures, giving them being, and supporting them in it; and there is his gracious presence with good men, regenerating, sanctifying, comforting and refreshing them.

The heathen acknowledge this attribute. Anaxagoras calls him an infinite mind; Pythagoras* defines him, a mind that is diffused throughout all the parts of the world, and goes through all nature; and Sallustius† observes, that he is not contained or comprehended in place. So the Jews say‡ the Shecinah, or divine Majesty, is everywhere; and they call God *place*, by an antiphrasis, as Buxtorf observes, because he is illocal, not contained in any place, but gives place to all.

This attribute is most clearly expressed in several passages of Scripture, particularly in Psalm cxxxix. 7—10. where the Psalmist asks, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?* Not his gracious presence, for a good man would never seek to flee from that, but his essential presence. It is in the Hebrew text *from thy face;* and face signifies the essence and nature of God, which is invisible and incomprehensible. (Exod. xxxiii. 20.) The Psalmist then,

* Ambo apud Lactant. de fals. relig. l. 1. c. 5.

† De Diis, c. 2. Jovis omnia plena, Virgil. Bucolic. eclog. 3.

‡ T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 25. 1.

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enumerates all places that could be thought of to which to flee; "*If I ascend to heaven thou art there.*" Could he by any means climb up to heaven, there God is in all the glory of his Majesty; there is his palace, his habitation, and his throne. *If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there;* where the wicked are turned, and the apostate angels cast; there God is sustaining them in their being, pouring in his wrath into their consciences, and continuing the punishment inflicted on them. Or whether the grave is here meant, which is sometimes the sense of the word used, there God is watching over their dust, and preserving it from being lost, in order to raise it up at the last day. *If I take the wings of the morning*, and fly as fast as the morning light, which soon reaches the furthermost parts of the earth; or as the rays of the sun, which dart from east to west, at its rising, instantly; *and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;* in the most remote islands of it, or in the uttermost parts of the western shore; *even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.* There is a like enumeration in Amos ix. 2, 3.* Another passage says, (Isa. lxvi. 1.) *Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.* So immense is he that he sits upon the one, and treads on the other. But nowhere is the Omnipresence of God more expressly declared than in Jer. xxiii. 23, 24, *Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not afar off?* He not only observes persons and things in heaven, which may be thought at hand, and near him, but persons and things on earth, and those at the greatest distance. He is as

* Quo fugis Encelade, quascumque accesseris oras—sub Jove semper eris—Virgil.

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near the one as the other. *Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?* not only with inhabitants, and with all things, the effects of his power and goodness; but with his nature and essence, which exceeds all bounds of place and space.

Nor do other passages of Scripture, however they may seem at first sight, contradict this doctrine. Cain and Jonah were said to flee from God's presence, (Gen. iv. 16. Jonah i. 3.) But Cain only went either from the place where he and the Lord had been conversing; or from the public place of worship, at the east of the garden of Eden, where was the symbol of the divine presence, an altar, where he and his brother had sacrificed. Jonah's fleeing, was withdrawing himself from the service of God, and declining to go on his errand, foolishly imagining that, by going beyond the sea, he should avoid being urged to his duty. But he soon found his mistake, and that God was everywhere, and could meet with him by sea and by land. Moses said to the disobedient Israelites, *The Lord is not among you?* and he *will not be with you*, (Num. xiv. 42, 43.) which he might very truly say, since the ark of the covenant, the symbol of the divine presence, remained in the camp, and went not with them, nor had they any reason to believe that God would so be with them, as to prosper them, when they acted contrary to his express command. God is never with wicked men, as with the good, by his gracious presence, but he is with them by his omnipresence and power, supporting them in their being. It is urged against the omnipresence of God, that he is said to be in heaven, and that men pray unto him as their Father in heaven. (Psalm cxv. 3. Isa. lxiii. 15. Matt.

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v. 9.) In what peculiar sense God may be said to be in heaven, has been observed already; nor is he ever said to be in heaven only. The heaven of heavens cannot contain him, (1 Kings viii. 27.)

2. The *Eternity* of God belongs to his infinity; for he is not bounded by time, and therefore eternal. He is often called *the everlasting God*, and the *King eternal.* (Gen. xxi. 31. Deut. xxxiii. 27. Isa. xl. 28. Jer. x. 10. Rom. xvi. 28. 1 Tim. i. 17.) The words, *eternal*, *everlasting*, and *forever*, are sometimes used in an improper sense of things which are of a long duration, but limited, having both beginning and end. The everlasting possession of the land of Canaan was granted in the everlasting covenant of circumcision, and yet both are now at an end. (Gen. xvii. 7, 8.) The rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses are said to be ordinances and statutes forever, yet they were designed to continue but for a time, and have been long since abolished. (Numb. x. 8. and xv. 15. and xviii. 8, 11, 19, 23.) The Temple built by Solomon is said to be a settled place for God to abide in forever; and he himself said that he would put his name in it forever, and it should be his rest forever; and yet it has been demolished long ago. (1 Kings. viii. . id ix. 3. Psalm cxxxii. 14.) The thrones of David ..d Solomon are said to be established forever, and yet if taken in a literal sense, they are no more. Sometimes the phrase *forever*, only respects the year of jubilee. (Exod. xxi. 6.)

Some creatures and things are said to be everlasting, and even eternal, which have a beginning, though they have no end; and this is what the schools call *æviternity*, as distinct from eternity. Thus angels, and the

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souls of men, being creatures of God, have a beginning; though, being immaterial and immortal, shall never die. The happiness of the saints is called eternal glory, "an eternal weight of glory; eternal life; an eternal inheritance; an house eternal in the heavens," (1 Pet. v. 10. Tit. i 2. 2 Cor. iv. 17. and v. 1. Heb. ix. 15.) And the misery of the wicked is signified by suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, by everlasting fire, and everlasting punishment, (Jude v. 7. Matt. xxv. 41, 46.) yet these have a beginning, though they will have no end; and. therefore, are improperly called eternal.

Eternity, properly, is that which is without beginning and without end,* and is without succession, or does not proceed in a succession of moments one after another. It is opposed to time, which has a beginning, goes on in a succession, and has an end. Thales being asked what God was, answered, "what has neither beginning nor end,† which is eternity." A Jewish writer‡ defines it, "in which there is no former nor latter; nor order, nor succession of times, it being without motion." The Bible thus expresses it. *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.* (Psalm xc. ii.) Eternity, in this sense, is peculiar to God, which must be understood not of the Father, or first person only, but of the Son and Spirit also; who are, with the Father the one God, and possess the same undivided nature, of which Eternity is an attribute. The Son, though as to his human nature

* Aristot. Ethic. l. 6. c. 3.

† Thales in Laert. l. 1. Vita Thalet.

‡ R. Joseph Albo in Sepher Ikkarim, l. 2. c. 18.

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he was born in the fulness of time, yet, as to his divine nature, *his goings forth* were *from of old from everlasting*, and as Mediator, he was *set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was*, (Mic. v. 2. Prov. viii. 23, 24.) The Spirit of God was concerned in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and so must have previously existed. (Gen. i. 1, 2. Job xxvi. 13. Psalm xxxiii. 6.)

1. That God is without beginning, may be proved from his necessary self-existence. The existence of God must be arbitrary, or necessary. If arbitrary, it must be from his own will, or from the will of another. Certainly not from his own will, which would suppose him already in being, and which would be a contradiction. Nor is it from the will of another, for then that other would be both prior and superior, and so be God. It remains, therefore, that he necessarily existed, and must be eternal since there was none before him. If there was an instant in which he was not, then there was an instant in which there was no God; and if so, there may be one again in which he may cease to be; for that which once was not, may again not be; and this comes into the depths of atheism. He declares "*Before me there was no God formed; neither shall there be after me.*" (Isa. xliii. 10.) The eternity of God may be inferred from his *immutability*, which has been already established; the two prove each other, (Psalm cii. 27.) For if he is not eternal, he must have passed from non-existence into being, and what can be a greater change, than to come out of nothing into being? Moreover, God is the most *perfect Being;* which he would not be, if not eternal; for not to be or to have a beginning, is an imperfection; and it is an humbling consideration to

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man, a creature of time, that he is but *of yesterday.* (Job viii. 9.)

The Eternity of God may be proved from his *attributes*, several of which are said to be eternal, or from everlasting. The *power* of God is expressly called his *eternal power.* The *knowledge* God has of all things is from eternity; though the things known are in time. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, απ' αιωνος, from eternity. (Acts xv. 18.) The mercy of God is eternal, it is said to be from everlasting to everlasting. (Psalm ciii. 17.) God's purposes, counsels, and decrees are said to be of old, that is, from everlasting. (Isa. xxv. 1.) No new purposes and resolutions rise up or are framed by him in his mind; for then there would be something in him which was not before, which would imply mutability. Particularly the purpose of God, according to election, or his choice of men to everlasting life is eternal; not only was before men had done any good or evil, (Rom. ix. 11,) but they were chosen by him *from the beginning*, (2 Thess. ii 13.) even before the foundation of the world; (Eph. i. 4.) wherefore God, who chose them to salvation, must be eternal.

The Eternity of God may be concluded from the covenant of grace, styled an *everlasting covenant*, (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) not only because it will endure immoveable and unalterable for ever, but because it was from everlasting; for though it is sometimes called a new covenant, yet not because newly made, or only newly manifested; but because it is always new, and never grows old.

It may be proved from the works of God in time.

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All beings have their being from him; and time beginning with them, he that made them must be before all time, and therefore eternal. This is the argument used to prove the eternity of Christ, the Word, that he was in the beginning, that is, from eternity with God; "because all things were made by him, and that he is the first-born of every creature, and before all things, because all things are created by him, and by him do all things consist. (John i. 1, 2, 3. Col. i. 15, 16, 17.)

2. That God is to everlasting, and without end, may be proved from his *spirituality* and *simplicity*, already established. What is compounded, and consists of parts may be resolved into them again, but a spirit being immaterial, and especially an infinite and uncreated one, is immortal and continues forever. It may be argued from his *independence*. Being dependant on none; there is none above nor superior to him, that can put an end to his being; nor can it be thought that he, being in a state of infinite happiness, would ever put an end to it himself. Hence his purposes and decrees are never frustrated, because he ever lives to bring them into execution. Men form resolutions and schemes, which, by reason of death, are never executed, their purposes are broken, and their thoughts perish; but "the counsel of the Lord stands for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations." (Psalm xxxiii. 11.) His covenant is firm and sure; more immoveable than rocks and mountains; it stands fast with Christ, for ever, and God commands it forever, because he ever lives to keep it. He will be the portion of his people for ever;" their everlasting ALL in ALL; and they shall reign and dwell with him for evermore.

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3. The Eternity of God, or his being from everlasting to everlasting, is without succession, or any distinctions of time succeeding one another, as moments, hours &c. and the reason is that he existed before such were in being; *Before the day was, I am he.* (Isia. xliii. 13.) And if his eternity past, so to speak, was without successive duration, or without succeeding moments, and other distinctions of time, why not his duration through time, and to all eternity, in the same manner? Should it be said, that days and years are ascribed to God; it is true, they are; but it is in accommodation and condescension to our weak minds, which are only capable of conceiving of duration as successive; and again those days and years ascribed to God are expressly said not to be as ours, (Job x. 5.) He is, indeed, called *The ancient of days*, (Dan. vii. 13.) not ancient *in* days, or *through* them, but he is more ancient than days, was before all days, and his duration cannot be measured by them. And it may be observed, that the differences and distinctions of time are ascribed to God together, and not as succeeding one another; he is the *same yesterday, to day, and for ever;* these are all at once, and together with him, *which is and was, and is to come.* (Heb. xiii. 8. Rev. 4.) These meet together in his name, Jehovah,* and so in his nature. He co-exists, with all the points of time, in time; but is unmoved and unaffected thereby as a rock in the rolling waves of the sea, or a tower in a torrent of gliding water, or as the gnomon or stile of a sundial, which has all the hours of the day surround-

* Plato observes, that to a temporal being we say of it, "it is, and was, and will be;" but to the eternal Being, "to him only it is," in Timæo.

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ing it. Hence it is that *one day is with the Lord as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day*, (2 Pet. iii. 8.) But if his duration were successive, or proceeded by succeeding moments, days and years, one day would be but one day with him, and not a thousand; and a thousand days would answer to a thousand days, and not be one only. A Jewish writer* well observes, that it cannot be said of him that he is older now than he was in the days of David, or when the world was created; for times make no change in him. In short, God is Eternity itself, and inhabits eternity.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LIFE OF GOD

THE attributes now to be treated upon are such as belong to God as an active and operative Spirit. Activity supposes life and operation. Some think this is not a single perfection of God, but expressive of all the divine perfections; and, indeed, it is his nature and essence —it is himself; but so is every other attribute his nature, under different considerations, and as variously displayed. This may, therefore, be treated of as a distinct attribute; and it is a very eminent and fundamental one by which God exerts his nature and essence, and displays all his perfections.

And in order to apprehend somewhat of the life of God, for comprehend it we cannot, it may be necessary to consider life in the creatures. And by rising from

* Joseph Albo in Sepher Ikkarim, fol. 66. 1.

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the lowest degree of life to a higher, and from that to a higher still, we may form some idea of the life of God, inadequate though it be. Life is a principle in the creature by which it moves itself. That which has motion has life, and that which has no motion is without life. It is self-motion only that indicates life. And self-motion may properly be attributed, though under a divine agency, for all creatures live and move and have their being in God. Hence it is that such as only seem to have self-motion, are, in an improper sense, said to live; as a fountain, flowing with water, is called living, (Gen. xxvi. 19.) and water that is stagnated in pools and lakes and remains unmoved, is dead.

The lowest degree of real life is the vegetable Plants and trees are truly said to live, (Ezek. xlvii. 7, 9.) for though they have no local motion, yet they have a motion of growth and increase. In animals there is a higher degree of life. They are possessed of sensitive and locomotive powers. But neither of these kinds of life can assist us in our ideas of the life of God; for they are in no wise similar. There is a higher degree of life still, which is found in rational creatures, angels and men. They are capable not only of operating on bodies without them, but of performing acts within themselves, by a self-motion, suited to their nature as spirits; such as to understand, will, choose, love, hate, &c. Such may be called the motions of the mind; as inclinations to sin are called *motions*. (Rom. vii. 5.) These internal acts of the mind, which show a rational life, most resemble what is in God. But the nearest conception of the life of God that we can arrive at, is that which is in regenerated persons, who have a principle of spiritual

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life, grace and holiness, implanted in them by the Spirit of God, and are made partakers of the divine nature, having Christ formed within them; "and they live, yet not they but Christ lives in them." By having such a principle of life wrought in them, they understand divine and spiritual things, will and do that which is spiritually good, the Spirit of God working in them a disposition thereunto, and giving them power to perform. "Being in Christ, and created in him unto good works," they perform vital spiritual acts, and live a spiritual holy life, which is called *the life of God*.

God is life *essentially*, it is his nature and essence, it is himself, it is in and of him. The natural life of creatures is not in and of themelves; but is in God, and from him. The spiritual and eternal life of the saints is not in and of themselves; but is from God, "hid with Christ in God." But the life of God is in and of himself; *the Father has life in himself*, (John v. 26.) and so has the Son and Word of God, (John i. 1, 4.) and likewise the Spirit, called, therefore, *the spirit of life*. (Rev. xi. 11.) The natural and spiritual life of men depends on God, and they live not so much their own life as another's. But God lives his own life; which, as it is without a cause, has no dependence on any other. It does not arise from any composition of parts, and the union of them, as the natural life of man does. And the spiritual life of saints arises from the union of Christ and his Spirit, as a principle of life to them; which could it be dissolved, (as it cannot,) death would ensue, even death spiritual and eternal.

The Scriptures frequently speak of God as the living God both in the Old and New Testament, (Deut. v. 26,

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Josh. iii. 10. Psal. xlii. 2. and lxxxiv. 2. 2 Cor. vi. 16.) and not the Father only, God also, is called the living God. (Heb. iii Spirit is called the spirit of the living God And this title and epithet is applied in and contradistinction from those that are God. The living God is opposed to id motionless. (Jer. x. 5, 10, 15, 16. Acts xi i. 9.) And God is not only acknowle living God, and to live forever and ever, greatest personages, and proudest mona were upon earth, and who even had set for God, (Dan. iv. 34. and vi. 26.) but h himself: *And lift up my hand and say* (Deut. xxxii. 40.) *As I live saith the L* frequently used by him, (Num. xiv. 28. his life, which is himself; "for when he no greater, he swore by himself." (Heb. same arguments which prove his eterni also that he lives forever; he *is the true God, and an everlasting King.* (Jer. x. 10 makes this remarkable observation, "The operation of God, is immortality, this is e wherefore there must needs be perpetual n

Eternal life, so often spoken of in Scri the saints shall enjoy for evermore, i what he has provided and prepared fo God must have life in its highest degree even essentially, originally, infinitely and he could never give life in every sense unt and he must live for ever, to continue ete people, and preserve them in it.

* De Cœlo, l. 2. c. 3.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.

Some of the names of God, in the Hebrew language, are thought to be derived from words which signify firmness and stability, strength and power; as Adonai, El, El-Shaddi, which latter is always rendered almighty, (Gen. xvii. 1. Exod. vi. 3) and the Greek word παντοκράτωρ is used of God in the New Testament, translated almighty and omnipotent. (Rev. i. 8. and iv. 8. and xix. 6.) Linus says "Omnipotence is essential to God; a weak Deity is an absurdity to the human mind." And the heathen generally suppose their gods to be omnipotent. All spirits are powerful, as their operations show; of which we learn something from our own spirits or souls, endowed with various powers and faculties and able to operate upon the body to quicken and guide it. Angelic spirits are still more powerful, they excel in strength, and are called mighty angels, (Psalm ciii. 20. 2 Thess. i. 7.) One of them slew in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. (2 Kings xix. 35.) Can less than omnipotence be ascribed to God, the uncreated and infinite Spirit, who has endowed these with all their power, might and strength? This may be inferred from his *infinity*. As a Jewish writer* argues, since power is attributed to God, it must be understood that it is infinite; for if it was finite, it might be conceived that there was a greater power than his; and so privation would fall on God. Unlimited and unbounded

* Joseph Albo in Sepher Ikkarim, fol. 68. 2.

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as to space, he is omnipresent; unlimited and unbounded as to time, he is eternal; and unlimited and unbounded as to power, he is omnipotent. Moreover, this attribute of God may be confirmed by his *perfection*. Want of power in a creature is an imperfection, and would be so in God. And this may be strengthened further, by observing the *uselessness* of many other perfections without it; for what though he knows all things fit and proper to be done, for his own glory, and the good of his creatures, if he cannot accomplish them?

The power of God reaches to all things, and, therefore, is called Omnipotence. That which is impossible with men is possible with God. The God of nature is not bound by the laws, rules, and course of nature. He stopped the sun in its course in the times of Joshua; made iron to swim by the hands of the prophet Elisha, and suffered not fire to burn the persons in the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar. There are some things, indeed, which God cannot do, and which the Scriptures express, as, that *he cannot deny himself*, (2 Tim. ii. 13.) nor do anything that is contrary to or subversive of his being, his honor and glory. He cannot make another God, for it would be contrary to himself, to the unity of his Being, and the declaration of his Word. He cannot make a finite creature infinite; for there would then be more infinites than one, which is a contradiction. It is also said that he cannot lie, (Tit. i. 2. Heb. vi. 18,) for that would be contrary to his truth and faithfulness. He can do nothing that is contrary to his attributes, or that implies a contradiction. But these are no prejudices to his omnipotence, nor proofs of weakness. They arise only out of the abundance and fulness of his

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power, who can neither do a weak nor wicked thing To do, or attempt which, would prove impotence and not omnipotence.

The power of God may be considered as absolute, and as actual or ordinate. According to his absolute power, he can do all things not contrary to his nature and perfections, and which do not imply contradiction; even though he has not, nor ever will. Thus he could have raised up children to Abraham out of stones, though he would not; and have sent twelve legions of angels to deliver Christ out of the hands of his enemies, but did not. (Matt. iii. 9. and xxvi. 53.) He who has made the stars in the heaven innumerable, could have vastly increased their number; and he who has made an innumerable company of angels, and men on earth, as the sand of the sea, could have added to them infinitely more. The power of God has never been exerted to its uttermost.

He has done, and does whatsoever he pleases, which may be called, his ordinate and actual power. That what he has willed and determined is actually done, there is abundant proof in creation, the visible works of which are proofs of the invisible attributes of God, and particularly of his eternal power. (Acts iv. 24. Rom. i. 20.) Creation is making something out of nothing, which none but omnipotence can effect. (Heb. xi. 3.) No artificer can work without materials. The potter may cast his clay into whatsoever form and figure he pleases, but the least portion of clay he cannot make. Nor can any artificer work without tools. But God can work without instruments. It was simply by his all-commanding word that

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everything sprung at once into being. (Gen. i. 3, &c. Psalm xxxvi. 9.) Creation is an instantaneous act without succession, and requiring no length of time. God said, "Let there be light;" and it immediately sprung out of darkness. On the second day he said, "Let there be a firmament," an expanse, and at once the airy heaven was streched out like a curtain around our earth. On the third day he said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, herbs, and fruit-trees;" and they arose directly in all their verdure and fruitfulness. On the fourth he commanded "Let there be lights in the heavens; and no sooner was it said, than the sun, moon, and stars blazed forth in all their lustre and splendor. On the fifth and sixth days orders were given for the bringing forth of fish, fowl and beasts, which was immediately done. And last of all, man was at once made, complete and perfect, out of the dust of the earth. This time was allotted not on account of God, who could have completed all in an instant, but for the sake of men, who when they read the history of the creation, may perhaps pause and meditate and wonder.

The works of creation were done without weariness from which no labour of men is free; though he has wrought such stupenduous works, *fainteth not, neither is weary*, (Isia. xl. 28.) and he is said to have rested on the seventh day, not on account of fatigue, but to denote he had finished his work, brought it to perfection, and ceased from it.

Omnipotence appears in the sustentation and support of all creatures, and in the provision made for them. "He upholds all things by the word of his power;" the heavens, the earth, and the pillars thereof, (Acts xvii. 28. Col.

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i. 16, 17. Heb. i. 3. Psalm lxxv. 3.) which none but an almighty arm can do. *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing; he bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under him.* He gives *fruitful seasons, filling* mens' *hearts with food and gladness*, and provides for all the fowls of the air, and "the cattle on a thousand hills." (Job xxvi. 7, 8. and xxxviii. 10, 11, 12, 25, 26. Acts xiv. 17.) What hand can do all these but an almighty one!

The omnipotence of God may be seen in the redemption of men by Christ, in his incarnation and birth of a virgin, which the angel ascribes to *the power of the Highest*, the most high God, with whom *nothing is impossible*, (Luke i. 35, 37.) and which was an expedient devised by infinite wisdom, to remove a difficulty which none but omnipotence could surmount, namely, to bring *a clean thing out of an unclean.* For it was necessary that the Saviour of men should be man, that the salvation should be wrought out in human nature, and it was necessary that he should be free from sin, who became a sacrifice for it. He wrought miracles which were such instances of omnipotence, as to cause in those that saw them, amazement at the mighty power of God. (Matt. xi. 5. Luke ix. 43.) And especially may omnipotence be seen in making Christ, the man of God's right hand, strong for himself; in strengthening him in his human nature to work out salvation, in upholding him under the weight of sins and sufferings; in enabling him to bear the wrath of God, and the curses of a righteous law, and to grapple with all the powers of darkness, and to spoil them, and make a triumph over them; and in

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raising him from the dead for justification, without which salvation would not have been complete.

Almighty power may be discerned in the conversion of sinners. That is a creation, and creation is an act of omnipotence, as has been proved. Men, in conversion, are made new creatures; "created in Christ, and after the image of God;" have new hearts and spirits, created in them; new principles of grace and holiness formed in them; are turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; and are made willing in the day of God's power," upon them, to be saved by Christ and serve him; to submit to his righteousness, and to part with their sins and sinful companions—all which are effects of the exceeding greatness of the power of God. And if we consider the means used, generally speaking, "the foolishness of preaching," and also the great opposition made to this work, through the enmity and lusts of mens' hearts, the malice of Satan, the snares of the world, and the influence of wicked companions; it cannot be thought to be any thing short of the omnipotent hand of God that snatches men, as brands, out of the burning.

That the Lord God is omnipotent, may be evinced from the rise and progress of Christianity, the success and continuance of the Gospel, notwithstanding the opposition of men and devils. The interest of Christ in the world rose from small beginnings; like the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. And the Gospel has lived through all the persecutions of Rome pagan and papal, and still continues, notwithstanding the craft of false teachers, and the force of

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furious persecutors; and will remain the everlasting Gospel.

The final perseverance of every particular believer in grace and holiness, is a proof of the divine omnipotence. Otherwise indwelling sins and corruptions would prevail, Satan's temptations be too powerful for them, and the snares of the world would draw them aside; but they are *kept by the power of God*, the mighty power of God, as in a garrison, *through faith unto salvation.* (1 Pet. i. 5.)

The almighty power of God will be displayed in the resurrection of the dead. What but the all-commanding voice of the almighty God can rouse the dead, and raise them to life, "some to the resurrection of life, and some to the resurrection of damnation?" What else can gather all nations before him, and oblige them to stand at the judgment seat of Christ to receive their several sentences? And what but his vengeful arm of omnipotence can execute the sentence on millions and millions of devils and wicked men, in all the height of wrath, rage, fury, and rebellion. (Phil. iii. 21. John v. 28, 29, Matt. xxv. 32—46. Rev. xx. 8, 9, 10.)

CHAPTER IX.

THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD.

HAVING considered the attributes of God, which belong to him as an active and operative Spirit, we proceed with such perfections as may be ascribed to him as an intelligent Spirit; to which rational spirits, endowed

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with understanding, will and affections, bear some similarity. God is said to have a mind and understanding, (Rom. xi. 34. Isa. xl. 28.) to which may be referred, the attributes of knowledge and wisdom, which are combined. (Rom. xi. 33.)

That knowledge belongs to God, is called in question by impious and atheistical persons, (Psalms lxxiii. 11.) particularly with respect to human affairs, upon grounds which seem to arise from the supposed distance of God in Heaven from men on earth, and which are easily answered by observing the omnipresence of God. All rational creatures have knowledge. Now if there is knowledge in any of the creatures of God, then much more in God himself. Besides, all that knowledge that is in angels or men, comes from God; he is a God of knowledge, (1. Sam. ii. 3.) the source and fountain of it, and therefore it must be in him in its perfection. Wherefore strong is the reasoning of the Psalmist, *He that teacheth man knowledge shall he not know?* (Psalm xciv. 10.) And it appears from all his works of creation, which are ascribed to his wisdom, understanding and knowledge. (Prov. iii. 19, 20.) The government of the world, and the judgment of the last day, suppose and require the same. (Rom. xi. 33. 1 Cor. iv. 5.) In short, without knowledge, God would be no other than the idols of the Gentiles.

In extent the knowledge of God reaches to all things, (John xxi. 17. 1 John iii. 20.) and is, therefore, called *omniscience.* The heathen* ascribe it to God, and extend it to thoughts. Thales† being asked, whether a man

* Hesiod, Opera et Dies, l. 1. v. 263.

† Apud Laert. Vita ejus, Val. Maxim. l. 7. c. 2. extern. 8.

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doing ill could be concealed from God? answered, no, nor thinking either. And Pindar* says, if a man hopes that anything will be concealed from God, he is deceived.

God knows himself, his nature and perfections. Rational creatures are endowed with knowledge of themselves, their nature, and what belongs to them. Even men in their fallen and imperfect state, know something of themselves, of the constitution, temperament, and texture of their bodies, and of the powers and faculties of their souls. *Nosce teipsum, Know thyself*, has been reckoned a wise maxim with philosophers, and the first step to wisdom and knowledge. And if creatures know themselves in any degree, infinitely much more must the Creator of all, know himself.

God knows all his creatures. There is not *any creature*, not one excepted, *that is not manifest in his sight.* (Heb. iv. 13.) *Known unto him are all his works;* all that his hand has wrought. (Acts xv. 18. when he had finished his works of creation, *he saw every thing that he had made*, looked over it and considered it, and pronounced it good. (Gen. i. 31.) He knows all *rational* beings, as angels and men; the angels, though innumerable, being his creatures, standing before him, beholding his face, and sent forth by him as ministring spirits. The elect angels, he must know, since he has chosen them and put them under Christ, the head of all principality and power; and confirmed them, by his grace, in their happy state. Yea, the apostate angels, devils, are known by him, and are laid up in chains of darkness reserved to the

* Olymp. Ode 1. so Epicharmus apud Clement. Stromat. l. 5.

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judgment of the great day, and are under the continual eye of God. God knows all men, good and bad, all the sons of men, the inhabitants of the earth, wherever they are, in all places and in all ages. (Psalm xxxiii. 13, 14. Prov. xv. 2.)

God knows all things whatsoever, as well as himself and the creatures; he knows all things possible to be done, though they are not, nor ever will be. This knowledge of things is what is called by the schoolmen, "Knowledge of simple intelligence," not actually done. He knows what might be, and in course would be, should he not prevent by the interposition of his power and providence, which he determines to do. Thus he knew the wickedness and treachery of the men of Keilah to David, and that if he stayed they would deliver him unto the hands of Saul, and therefore gave him notice that he might make his escape. God knows all things past, present, and future, which the schools call, "knowledge of vision;" or an intuitive view of all actual things. He knows all things future, because he has determined they shall be; it is his will that gives futurition to them, and, therefore, he must certainly know what he wills shall be. And this is what is called

Prescince or *Foreknowledge;* and of which Tertullian,* many hundreds of years ago, observed, that there were as many witnesses as there are prophets; for all prophecy is founded on God's foreknowledge and predetermination. Indeed, with respect to God, there is nothing casual or contingent.† Nothing occurs but

* Adv. Marcion. l. 2. c. 5.

† Mihi ne in Deum quidem cadere videatur, ut sciat quid casu et fortuito futurum sit; si enim scit certe, illud eveniet; sin certe eveniet nulla fortuna est, Cicero de Divinatione, l. 2.

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what is decreed to be done. (Lam. iii. 37, 38.) That which is chance to others, is not so to him. Though the lot is cast into the lap, and it is casual to men, how it will result, *the whole disposing of it is of the Lord.* (Prov. xvi. 33.) What is more contingent than the imaginations, thoughts, and designs of men? and yet these are foreknown before conceived in the mind, (Deut. xxxi. 21. Psalm cxxxix. 2.)—or than the voluntary actions of men, yet these are foreknown and foretold by the Lord, long before they are done. How this is reconcilable with the liberty of man's will, is a difficulty; and, therefore, held as an objection to the certain foreknowledge and decree of God. But whether this difficulty can be removed or not, the thing is no less certain. God's decrees do not at all infringe the liberty of the will, nor lay any force upon it; they only imply a necessity of the event, but not of coercion, or force on the will. Men act as freely, and with as full consent of their will, as if there were no foreknowledge and determination by God.

The Scriptures speak of another kind of *prescince*, or *foreknowledge*, on which the election of persons to eternal life is founded, (Rom. viii. 30. 1 Pet. i. 2.) which is not a foreknowledge of faith, holiness, and good works and perseverence therein as causes of it, for these are effects and fruits of election, which flow from it. This foreknowledge of persons, is joined with love and affection to its objects, and which is not general, but special. *The Lord knows them that they are his.* (2 Tim. ii. 19.) Not in general, as he knows all men; but distinctly, and particularly, he loves them, approves of them, and delights in them, and takes a particular care

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of them; whilst of others he says, *I know you not*, (Matt. vii. 23.) that is, as his beloved and chosen ones.

This may receive further proof from the several attributes of God; as from his *infinity*. God is infinite, unbounded as to knowledge, and so omniscient. From his eternity; he is from everlasting to everlasting, and, therefore, must know every thing that has been, is or shall be. Likewise from the *omnipresence* of God; he is everywhere, and, therefore, must know every creature and every action.

The manner in which God knows all things, is incomprehensible by us; we can say but little of it, "such knowledge is too wonderful for us." (Psalm cxxxix. 6.) We can better say in what manner he does not know, than in what he does. He does not know things by revelation, by instruction and communication from another; or any of the ways by which men obtain knowledge, for *shall any teach God knowledge? or who has taught him?* (Job xxi. 22. Isa. xl. 13, 14.) All things were known to God from eternity, when there were none in being to inform him. We conclude that he knows all things himself, in his own essence and nature.

CHAPTER X.

THE WISDOM OF GOD.

The next attribute which requires our attention is the Wisdom of God, which belongs to him as an intelligent Spirit; and is a more comprehensive attribute than that of knowledge; for it not only supposes that,

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but directs and uses it, in the best manner, and to the best ends and purposes; as well as his power and goodness.

I. *Wisdom is a perfection in God, and is in him in its utmost perfection; is consumate and infinite.*

An unwise being cannot be God. No man is wise, says Pythagoras,* but God only. That *with him is wisdom*, is frequently asserted in the sacred Scriptures. (Job xii. 12, 13. Dan. ii. 20, 21.) He is no less than three times called *the only wise God.* (Rom. xvi. 27. 1 Tim. i. 17. Jude 25.) The angels, those knowing and wise beings, when compared with him, are chargeable with *folly.* (Job iv. 18.) and as for "man, though he would be wise, he is born like a wild ass's colt." God is wisdom *efficiently;* the source and fountain, the God and giver of it. All that Adam had, or any of his sons, all is the gift of God. And he that gives wisdom to to the wise, must have infinite wisdom himself. The wisdom of God is *unsearchable;* there is no tracing it; it has a *depth* which is unfathomable. (Rom. xi. 33. see Job xi. 6, 7, 8, 9. and xxviii. 12—23.) Yet, though it cannot be traced out to the full, or be found out to perfection, there are some shining appearances and striking instances of it; which clearly and plainly prove that wisdom, in its utmost extent, is possessed by God.

II. *The wisdom of God appears in his purposes and decrees, and which are, therefore, called his counsels.* (Isa. xxv. 1.)

Resolutions and determinations with men are generally the wisest which are formed on close thought, on mature deliberation, and on consultation. Hence

* Laert. Vit. Philosoph. Præem. p. 8.

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the decrees of God, which are at once fixed with the highest wisdom, are called counsels; though his counsels are without consultation, and his determinations without deliberation. As he sees in his understanding what is most fitting to be done, his wisdom directs his will to determine, at once, what shall be done; and this is seen in appointing the end for which they are to be, in ordaining means suitable and conductive to that end; in determining upon the most proper time for execution, and in guarding against every thing that might hinder. The end for which God has appointed all that has been or shall be, is himself, his own glory which is the best that can be proposed. *The Lord hath made*, that is, appointed *all things for himself*. As all things are *of him*, as the efficient cause; and *through him*, as the wise orderer and disposer of them; so they are to him, as the final cause, or last end—to his own glory. (Prov. xvi. 4. Rom. xi. 36.) The means he fixes on to bring it about, are either extraordinary or ordinary; which latter are second causes depending upon him, the first cause, and which are linked together, and under his direction and influence most certainly attain the end. (Hos. ii. 21, 22.) The apostle treating of the decrees of God, and particularly of the decrees of election, breaks forth into this exclamation, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.* (Rom. xi. 33.) To show its sovereignty he passed this decree without any respect to the works of men, and before either good or evil were done; to show that he is no respecter of persons, he chose some out of every nation, Jews and Gentiles; and to show the freeness of his grace, he chose the foolish and weak

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things of this world, and things that are not, that no flesh should glory in his presence. To bring the chosen to a state of holiness and happiness, and in a way consistent with his justice; he has used means the wisest that could be devised, even "sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth; 'the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," the righteousness and death of Christ. (2 Thess. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 2.) The subordinate end of election, is the salvation of the elect, (1 Thess. v. 9.) the scheme and plan of which is so wisely formed, that is called the manifold wisdom of God. Even such decrees of God as relate to the sinful actions of men, are not destitute of wisdom—of the highest wisdom. The sin and fall of Adam, so momentuous, and of such consequence as to affect all mankind, could never have been without the knowledge and will of God; he could have prevented it if he would; but he left, as he decreed to leave, man to the mutability of his own will; the consequence of which was his fall. And, as he designed, so in his infinite wisdom, he has overruled this greatest of all evils; the source of all that has been in the world since, for the greatest good, the salvation of men by Christ; whereby all his perfections are glorified. So the sinful actions of men are, by the permissive will of God, suffered to be, and are sometimes apparently overruled for some important end; as the selling of Joseph into Egypt by his brethren; and especially the crucifixion of Christ by the Wicked Jews. And so wicked men are suffered to commit the grossest sins, as Pharaoh did, that God may be glorified in his justice, through inflicting his judgments upon them; by the execution of which he is known, and his name celebrated with

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praise and glory. (Exod. ix. 16.) And likewise the failings and sins of God's people serving to humble them, and are so overruled for good. But by this we are not authorised, nor encouraged to do evil that good may come; God only can overrule it to serve any good purpose.

The wisdom of God is displayed in his secret transactions with Christ in the covenant of grace. It appears in making such a covenant which is ordered *in all things*, for his own glory, the glory of the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; and for the good of his people in time, and their happiness, hereafter.

The wisdom of God is more clearly manifested in his visible works in time. *O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made thew all.* (Psalm civ. 24.)

Whole volumes have been written upon the wisdom of God in creation; and the subject is not exhausted. If we look up to the starry heavens, and the luminaries, the work of his fingers, curiously wrought; we may observe a wonderful display of divine wisdom. If we descend into the airy region, into the treasures of the snow and rain, which God has in reserve there, and wisely distributes on the earth at proper times; how he binds up the water in his thick cloud, and the cloud is not rent with the weight thereof; but causes them to decend in gentle showers, and in small drops; whereby the earth becomes fruitful; we cannot but observe amazing wisdom. If we come down to the earth, we may behold, besides men, placed on it to cultivate it, "the cattle on a thousnnd hills; the pastures covered with flocks; the valleys clothed with corn; grass grow-

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ing for the beasts, and herb for the service of man. And in the bowels of it, metals, minerals and coals; and all for the use of men; the wisdom, as the goodness of God, must be discerned. The structures of the bodies of creatures are very wonderfully fitted for their different actions and uses; but especially the texture of the human body, in all its parts, is very suprising. All his works praise him, declare his glory and show forth his handy-work.

The wisdom of God appears in the works of providence. It may be observed in the various returning seasons; seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, night and day; which keep their constant revolutions and stated courses. He has the charge over the earth, and disposes of the whole world, and all things in it. He sits on the circle of the earth, and beholds all. He places men in different stations of life, so as to have a dependance upon, and a connection with each other. He wisely governs, rules and overrules all things, for the mutual good of men, and his own glory. He does all things after the counsel of his will, in the wisest and best manner, and to answer the best ends and purposes. He orders the various scenes of prosperity and adversity, and sets the one against the other, particularly, he maketh all things work together for the good of his people, for the trial of their grace, and to make them meet for glory. There is infinite wisdom in the most intricate providences, even those which it is now difficult to account for, and to reconcile with the promises and perfections of God. And when the mystery of providence is finished, and the judgments of God are made manifest, and all are seen in one view,

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in a harmonious connection together; the wisdom of God in every part will then appear striking and amazing. As when a man looks on the wrong side of a piece of tapestry, or only views it in detached pieces; he is scarcely able to discern any art and beauty in it; but when it is all put together, and viewed on its right side, the wisdom, the contrivance, and art of the maker are observed with admiration.

The wisdom of God is to be seen in the great work of redemption and salvation by Christ. *Herein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.* (Eph. i. 7, 8.) Wisdom and prudence are displayed in other works of God; but in this all wisdom and prudence.

The *person* to the Redeemer was not any of the sinful race of men, for they all having sinned need a Redeemer; nor any of the angels, for whatever good will they might bear to such work, none were equal to it but his own Son, appointed and fore-ordained to be the Redeemer of his chosen people; the middle person in the Trinity, and most proper to be the Mediator; the Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God, and by whom all things were made, and so equal to such an undertaking. Being the mighty God, he was mighty to save, and his own arm has wrought out salvation. The great God is our Saviour. Now the finding out such a fit person to be the Redeemer of men, is to be ascribed solely to the wisdom of God. Had all men been summoned together, and this declared unto them, that God was willing they should be redeemed, could they find a proper person to redeem them; and had the angels been called in to assist with their counsel, they would never have been able to have

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proposed one fit for this work; for who could have thought of the Son of God, and proposed his becoming man and suffering, and dying in the stead of men, to redeem them? This is *nodus deo vindice dignus;* what God only could have found out, and he claims it to himself; *I*, the only wise God, *have found a ransom.* (Job xxxiii. 24. Psalm lxxxix. 19, 20.)

The wisdom of God appears in the persons fixed upon to be redeemed. That only a portion of mankind are embraced, is in part to show the sovereignty of God, in redeeming whom he pleases; and partly, (since all had sinned, and were deserving of death,) to glorify his grace and mercy in the redemption of some, and his justice in the destruction of others; and in both to show that he could, in right, have destroyed all. That it might appear that he is no respecter of persons, he has not limited the grace of redemption to any particular family or nation; but has redeemed some out of every nation, tongue, kindred, and people. To magnify the riches of his grace, he sent Christ to die for, and redeem, not the good and the righteous, who appeared so to themselves and others, but ungodly sinners, the worst and chief. (Rom. v. 6, 7, 8, 10.)

The *time* of mans' redemption was most opportune and seasonable. It was in due time; in the fulness of time fixed and agreed upon between the Father and the Son, after the faith and patience of God's people had been sufficiently tried, even for the space of four thousand years from the first hint of a Redeemer; after the Saviour, and his sacrifice, had been prefigured, by types, shadows, and sacrifices, for so long a time, and the use, end and efficacy of sacrifices had been sufficiently known.

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When the Gentile world was covered with darkness, blindness, ignorance, and all kinds of wickedness; when immorality, formality, hypocrisy, and neglect of the word and worship of God among the Jews prevailed, then said Christ, *Lo I come.*

The wisdom of God shines in the Gospel, the good news of salvation by Christ; in its doctrines, and in its ordinances. That itself is called, *the wisdom of God in a mystery; the hidden wisdom; the manifold wisdom of God.* (1. Cor. ii. 7. Eph. iii. 10.) Every doctrine is a display of it. Wisely has God appointed men, and not angels, to minister the word and administer ordinances; "men of the same passions with others; who may be heard and conversed with, without dread and terror. Frail, mortal men, are the earthen vessels, in which this treasure is put, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men.

The wisdom of God may be seen in the government and preservation of the Church of God in all ages. Wonderfully has it been preserved, and increased, amidst all the persecutions of men; no weapon formed against it has prospered; and God has made it and will still more make it to appear, that He rules in Jacob unto the ends of the earth.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE WILL OF GOD, AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF IT

In all intelligent beings there is a will, as well as an understanding; as in angels and men, so in God. He has an understanding which is infinite and unsearchable, and a will to do what he knows is most fitting to be done. His understanding influences and guides his will and his will determines all his actions. A will is frequently ascribed to God in Scripture. *The will of the Lord be done.* (Acts xxi. 14.) *Who has resisted his will.* (Rom. ix. 19.) *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will,* (Eph. i. 9.) and in many other places. The will of God is no other than God himself willing; it is essential to him; it is his nature and essence; it is not to be separated, or to be considered as distinct from it, or as a part of it, of which it is composed; which would be contrary to the simplicity of God. Will is ascribed to each of the divine persons; to the Father, (John vi. 39, 40.) to the Son, as a divine person, (John v. 21, and xvii. 24.) and who also, as man, has a will distinct from that, though subject to it, (John 38. Luke xxii. 42.) and to the Spirit, who is said to forbid, and not to suffer some things to be done, which is an act of the will.

God has but one will, but for our better understanding it, it may be distinguished. It would be unprofitable to trouble the reader with all the distinctions made by men. Some are false, and others vain and useless; such as into absolute and conditional, antecedent and

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consequent, effectual and ineffectual, &c. The distinction of the *secret* and *revealed* will of God has generally obtained among sound divines; the former is properly the will of God, the latter only a manifestation of it. Whatever God has determined within himself, whether to do himself, or to do by others, or to suffer to be done whilst it is in his own breast, and is not made known by any event in providence, or by prophecy, is his secret will. Such are the deep things of God, the thoughts of his heart, the counsels and determinations of his mind; which are impenetrable to others. But when these open, by events in providence, or by prophecy, then they become the revealed will of God. The book of Revelation is a discovery of the secret will of God from the coming of Christ to the end of the world; the greatest part of which has been fulfilled.

The will of God, which he would have performed by men, is revealed in the law, (Rom. ii. 18.) made known to Adam, by inscribing it on his heart, was delivered to the Israelites, written on tables of stone, by the finger of God; written on the hearts of God's people; who being transformed, by the renewing of their minds, come to know what is the good, perfect and acceptable will of God. (Rom. xii. 2.)

The revealed will of God in the Gospel relates to the kind intentions, and gracious regards of God to men, and discovers what before was his secret will concerning them; as, that he has chosen some to everlasting life and happiness; that he has appointed these to salvation by Christ; that Christ undertook to do this will of God, came from heaven to earth to do it, and has finished it; and that it is the will of God that these should

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be regenerated and sanctified; and "that they should never perish but have everlasting life," (Eph. i. 4, 5. John vi. 38. 1 Thess. iv. 3. John vi. 39, 40. Matt. xviii. 14.) But though all this is the revealed will of God, in the Gospel, yet as to particular persons interested herein, it is, in a great measure, a secret. It is the revealed will of God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, and that all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that after death there will be a judgment; and though it is revealed, that a day is fixed, as well as a person appointed to judge the world in righteousness; yet "of that day and hour knows no man;" no, not the angels; but God only. So that upon the whole, though there is some foundation for the distinctions of *secret* and *revealed*, yet they are not quite clear. Part of the will of God is, as yet, secret, and a part revealed, with respect to the same subject.

The most accurate distinction is that of *precept* and *purpose;* or the commanding and *decreeing* will of God.

God's will of precept, or his commanding will, is that which is often spoken of in Scripture; and is the rule of mens' duty, which consists of the fear of God, and the keeping of his commands.

The decreeing will of God is only properly speaking, his Will; the other is his Word. This is the rule of his own actions; he does all things in heaven and earth after his will, the counsel of it; and this will is always accomplished and cannot be resisted, frustrated, or made void.

The objects of God's Will.

1. God himself, not his Being, perfections, and modes of subsisting; as the paternity of the Father; the gen-

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eration of the Son; and the spiration of the Spirit. These naturally and necessarily exist, and do not depend upon the will of God. But it is his own glory: *The Lord hath made all things for himself;* that is, for his own glory. (Prov. xvi. 4.) He wills his own glory in all he does; as *all things are of him*, as the efficient Cause; and *through him*, as the wise Disposer of them; so they are *to him*, to his glory, as the final Cause, and last end of all. And this he wills necessarily; he cannot but will his own glory; as "he will not give his glory to another."

2. All things without himself, whether good or evil, are the objects of his will. There is a difference, indeed, between the objects of God's knowledge and power and the objects of his will; for though he knows all things, and his power reaches to all that is possible, though not made; yet he wills not all things that might be willed. Amesius* observes, though God is said to be omniscient and omnipotent, yet not omnivolent.

Of the good, are all things in nature, in providence and in grace.

All evil things are the objects of God's will; which are of two sorts.—1. *Malum pœnæ*, the evil of afflictions; whether in a way of chastisement, or of punishment—if in a way of chastisement, as they are to the people of God, they are according to the will of God; they do not spring out of the dust, nor come by chance; if in a way of punishment, there is no reason for complaint, since they are less than the sins deserve. All judgments, calamities and distresses, are of God, and according to his will. (Amos iii. 6.) Not that God wills

* Medulla Theolog. l. 1. c. 7. a. 47.

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these things for their sake or as taking delight in the afflictions and miseries of his creatures, (Lam. iii. 33. Ezek. xviii. 32) but for the sake of some good. The afflictions of his people are for their spiritual good, as well as for his own glory; and the punishment of the wicked is for the glorifying of his justice.—2. There is *malum culpæ*, or the evil of fault and blame, that is *sin*, about which there is some difficulty how the will of God should be concerned in it, consistent with his purity and holiness. That the will of God is some way or other concerned with it is most certain; for he either wills it or not wills it; the latter cannot be, for then it could not come to pass. (Lam. iii. 37.) Nor can it be that he neither wills it, or not wills it; that is, has no care about, nor concern at all with it; and that it is so without the verge, and not within the reach of his providence. (Ezek. ix. 9. Zeph. i. 12.) Besides, as Beza,* and other divines argue, unless God had voluntarily permitted sin to be, there could be no display, neither of his punitive justice or of his mercy. It may be added, that God's foreknowledge of sin most fully proves his will in it. That God foreknew sin would be, is certain; since he made a provision, in Christ, for the saving of men before it was. Now certain and immutable foreknowledge, such as the foreknowledge of God, is founded upon some certain and immutable cause; which can be no other than the divine will. God foreknows, certainly, that such and such things will be because he has determined in his will they shall be. To set this in the best light, it will be proper to consider, what is in sin, and relative

* Vide Maccov. Loc. Commun. c. 24 v. 195.

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of it. There is the act of sin, and there is the guilt of sin, which latter is an obligation to punishment, and the punishment itself. Concerning the two last there can be no difficulty—that God should will that men who sin should become guilty; be reckoned, accounted, and treated as such; nor that he should will their punishment and appoint and foreordain them to it. (Prov. xvi. 4. Jude 4.) The only difficulty is, about the act of sin; and this may be considered either as natural or moral; or the act, and the ataxy, disorder, irregularity, and vitiosity of it. As an action simply it is of God, and according to his will, without which, and the concourse of his providence, none can be performed. But the vituosity or irregularity of it, as it is an aberration from the law of God, and a transgression is of men only. And God cannot be said to will this—he forbids, abhors and detests it, he takes no pleasure in it, he is of purer eyes than even to behold it with approbation and delight. God cannot will it as sin, or for the sake of itself; but for the sake of some good to be brought about through it; as the fall of Adam, for the glorifying of his justice and mercy, in punishing some of his posterity, and saving others; the sin of Joseph's brethren selling him into Egypt, for the good of Joseph and his father's family, and the sin of the Jews, in crucifying Christ, for the redemption and salvation of men. And besides God may will one sin as a punishment for another; as it is most certain he has in the case of the Israelites, (Hos, iv. 9, 10, 13.) of the heathen philosophers, (Rom. i. 28.) and of the papists. (2 Thess. ii. 9—12.) Once more though God may be said, in such senses,

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to will sin, yet he wills it in a different way from what he wills good. He does not will to do it himself, nor to do it by others; but permits it to be done; which is not a bare permission, but a voluntary permission; expressed by God's *giving* up men to their own hearts' lusts, and by suffering them to walk in their own sinful ways. (Psalm lxxxi. 12. Acts xiv. 16.) He wills it not by his effective will, but by his permissive will; and therefore cannot be chargeable with being the author of sin; since there is a wide difference between doing it himself or by others, or ordering it to be done, and voluntarily permitting or suffering it to be done by others.

The nature and properties of the will of God.

It is natural and essential to him; it is his very nature and essence; his will is himself willing; and therefore there can be but one will in God; for there is but one God, whose nature and essence is one. The will of God is eternal, as may be concluded from the attribute of *eternity;* for if God is eternal, as he certainly is, even from everlasting to everlasting God, then his will must be eternal, since it is his nature and essence.

It is *immutable.* Immutability is expressly ascribed to the counsel of God, that is, to the will and purpose of God, (Heb. vi. 17.) and may be established from the attribute of *immutability.*

It is always efficacious. There are no mere wishes, or feeble velleites in God. His will is always effected and never made null and void. Otherwise he would not be almighty. As he is omnipotent, so is his will. Austin calls* it, his most omnipotent will. *For the*

* De Civitate Dei l. 18. c. 18.

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Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? Yea, he hath sworn, saying, *Surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, it shall stand.* (Isa. xiv. 24, 27.)

The will of God has no cause out of himself; for then there would be something prior to him, and greater and more excellent than he; as every cause is before its effect, and more exeellent. Nor can there be any impulsive or moving cause of his will; because there is in him no passive power to work upon; he is purely act, *actus simplicissimus*, a pure, active Spirit. Nor is there any final cause of what he wills and does, but his own glory; and it would be madness to seek for a cause of his willing that. And from this property of the will of God, it may be clearly discerned, that foreseen faith, holiness, and good works, cannot be the cause of God's will in the election of any to eternal life; and so the contrary, no cause of his will in the rejection of others.

The will of God, for the same reason, is not conditional; for then it would be dependent on the condition to be performed; which would be the first and chief in the attainment of the end. If, for instance, God willed to save all men conditionally; that is, on condition of faith and repentance; and to damn them if these conditions are wanting; who does not see that this conditional will is equally the same to save and to destroy? Destruction is equally willed as salvation; and where is the general love of God to men, so much talked of? there is none at all to any.

The will of God is most free and sovereign; which appears,

1. From the creation of the world, and all things in it. That the world is eternal, few have asserted.

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That it was made, and made by God, is generally agreed; and by the will of God, as the Scriptures assert. (Rev. iv. 11.) And indeed the time and order, and things contained are owing to the sovereign will of God. Why has he not made more worlds than he has, or why should he make this world when he did, and not sooner, or take six days when a moment might have sufficed?

The sovereignty of the will of God appears in the various events of providence. In the births and death of men, and in their conditions and circumstances in life. Riches and poverty are at the disposal of God, as shown by Agur's prayer. Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest monarch then on earth, when in the most flourishing circumstances, and in the height of his grandeur, was degraded from his dignity, as a man and monarch, and driven to dwell among beasts, and to become and live like one of them; and, after all, restored to his reason and to his throne, and former greatness, which extorted from him such an acknowledgement of the sovereign will of God as is perhaps no where more strongly expressed; *He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?* (Dan. iv. 35.) The special gifts of the grace of God are bestowed upon men according to the sovereign will of God. He regenerates some, and not others; calls by his grace, whom he pleases, when and by what means, according to his purpose; reveals the Gospel, to whom he would make them known; and hides them from the wise and prudent; *even so Father*, says Christ, *for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Eternal life, which

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is the free gift of God, through Christ, is given only by him, to as many as the Father has given him. The penny which seems to mean eternal happiness, in the parable, is given to those who were called to labour in the vineyard in the eleventh hour, as to those who bore the heat and burden of the day. To what can all this be resolved, but into the sovereign will of God? who says, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* (Matt. xx. 15.)

CHAPTER XII.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

Of what may be called *Affections*, properly speaking, God has none, being free from all commotion and perturbation; yet they are ascribed to him, on account of there being some things said and done by him, which are similar to affections in intelligent beings, as love, pity, hatred, anger, &c. *Love* holds the first place, and enters so much into the nature of God, that it is said, *God is love.* (1 John iv. 8, 16.) So the Shekinah, or the divine majesty and glory is, by the Jews,* called *Love.* And the heathen give the same name to God. Plato expressly calls him *Love;* and Hesiod† speaks of love as the fairest and most beautiful among the immortal gods. In treating of this divine attribute, we consider

* Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 15. 1. et Lex. Cabal. p. 43, 44.
† Theogonia, v. 120.

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Its Objects.

1. The principal object of the love of God is himself. Self-love is found in all intelligent beings, and is commendable, unless carried to a sinful excess. None are required to love others more than themselves, but merely as themselves. (Matt. xxii. 39.) God* first and chiefly loves himself; and hence he has made himself, that is, his glory, the ultimate end of all he does in nature, in providence, and grace, (Prov. xvi. 4. Rom. xi. 36. Rev. iv. 11. Eph. i. 5.) and his happiness lies in contemplating himself, his nature and perfections. In that love he has complacency and delight in himself; nor needs he, nor can he have any thing out of himself that can add to his essential happiness.

The three divine Persons in the Godhead mutually love each other. That the Father loves the Son, is more than once declared. (John iii. 35. and v. 20.) The Father loves the Spirit, who is the very breath of the Father, from whence he has his name, and proceeding from the Father and possessing the same nature and essence. (Job xxxiii. 4. Psalm xxxiii. 6. John xv. 26. 1 John v. 7.) The Son loves the Father, of whom he is begotten, with whom he was brought up, in whose bosom he lay from all eternity, as his own and only begotten Son. The Son also loves the Spirit, since he proceeds from him, as from the Father, and is called the Spirit of the Son, (Gal. iv. 6.) and Christ often speaks of him with pleasure and delight, (Isa. xlviii. 16. and lxi. 1.

* Præclarum illud est et si quæris rectum quoque et verum, ut eos qui nobis carissimi esse debeant, æque ac nosmetipsos amemus; at vero plus fieri nullo facto potest, ne optandum quidem est in amicitia, ut me ille plus quam se amet, Cicero. Tusc. Quæs. A

John xiv. 16, 17, 26. and xv. 26. and xvi. 7, 13.) And the Spirit loves the Father and the Son, and sheds abroad the love of them both in the hearts of his people. (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, 12. John xvi. 14.)

All the works of creation are the objects of his love, and he is said to *rejoice in his works.* (Psal. civ. 31.) Rational creatures are the objects of his care, love and delight. He loves the holy angels, and has shown his love to them in choosing them to happiness, hence they are called *elect angels;* (1. Tim. v. 21.) by making Christ their head by whom they are confirmed in the estate in which they were created, (Col. ii. 10,) and by admitting them into his presence, allowing them to stand before him and behold his face. (Matt. xviii. 10.) And he bears a general love to all men, as they are his creatures, his offspring, and the work of his hands. But he bears a special love to the elect in Christ, which is called his *great love.* (Eph. ii. 4.) These he has chosen and blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, (Eph. i. 3, 4,) and this love is distinguishing and discriminating. (Mal. i. 1, 2. Rom. ix. 11, 12)

Instances of the love of God, to those chosen in Christ, appear in the love of the Father, in contriving and forming the scheme of their peace and reconciliation in Christ, from eternity, (2 Cor. v. 18, 19.) and in choosing them in him from the beginning, even from everlasting, to salvation, by him.

The love of the Son of God appears in all the works of Redemption.

The love of the Spirit also is most manifest in his coming into the hearts of God's elect, by shedding abroad the love of God and Christ, and in being the earnest pledge and seal of them to the day of redemption.

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(John xvi. 7, 8. Rom. viii. 15, 16, 26, 27. Eph. i. 13, 14.)

As a cause for this love there is no motive or inducement to it in the objects, no loveliness to excite it. All men by nature are corrupt and abominable; rather to be loathed than loved. The loveliness or beauty in saints, is owing to the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them, and to the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, whereby they are all glorious within, and appear in the beauties of holiness; and this is the fruit of the love of God, and not the cause of it. Nor can it be their love to God, that is the cause of his to them, for they had no love in them when Christ died for them, nor until regenerated by the Spirit of God. And when they love him, it is because he first loved them. (1 John iv. 10, 19.) And though Christ is said to love them that love him, and the Father is said to love them too, yet this must not be understood of the first love of God and Christ, unto them, nor of its first display, but its further and larger manifestations. Nor are good works the cause of this love; it was before either good or evil were done, (Rom. ix. 11, 12.) and appeared towards them while they were yet in their sins, and before they were capable of performing good works. (Rom. v. 8. Tit. iii. 3, 4. Eph. ii. 2, 3, 4.) In short, the love of God purely flows from his good will and pleasure, who "is gracious to whom he will be garcious." (Exod. xxxiii. 19.) It is that pure river that proceeds out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb, as an emblem of sovereignity. (Rev. xxi. 1.)

The love of God is eternal. This is evident from the love of God to Christ, which was before the foundation of the world; and with the same and as

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eally love, he loved his people also. (John xvii. 23, 24.) And from acts of love to them in eternity; as the election of them in Christ, which supposes love for them. (Eph. i. 4.)

The love of God is immutable, unalterable, and invariable. It is himself, and, therefore, must be without any variableness or shadow of turning. Some make various distinctions and find a love of benevolence, by which God wishes or wills good to men; and then a love of benificence, and he does good to them, and works good in them; and then a love of complacency and delight. But this is to make God changeable, as we are. The love of God admits of no degrees; it neither increases nor decreases. It is needless to ask whether it is the same before as after conversion, since there were as great, if not greater gifts of love, bestowed on the object loved, before conversion—such as the gift of God himself, in the everlasting covenant; the gift of his Son to die for them when in their sins; and the gift of the Spirit to them, in order to regenerate, quicken and convert them. Heaven itself, eternal life, is not a greater gift than these, and they were before conversion. Conversion makes a change in men, but it makes no change in the love of God. God changes his dispensations and dealings, but never changes his love. He sometimes rebukes and chastizes, but still he loves. He sometimes hides his face but his love continues the same. (Psalm lxxxix. 29—33. Isa. liv. 7—10.)

The love of God endures forever. It is an everlasting love, in that sense, (Jer. xxxi. 3.) the bond of union between God and Christ, and the elect, and it can never be dissolved.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE GRACE OF GOD.

This attribute may be considered, both as it resides in God and as displayed in acts towards his creatures. As in himself—it is himself—his nature and essence. He is *Grace* itself, most amiable and lovely. And thus he was before he had displayed his grace towards any of his creatures. This appears from the loveliness of Christ, the image of the Father, the express image of his person; who, to them that believe, is exceeding precious, and altogether lovely.

The grace of God may be considered as displayed in acts of goodness towards his creatures, especially to mankind, and is no other than his free favor and good will. It is no other than love unmerited and undeserved, exercising and communicating itself in a free and generous manner. There are many things called grace, and the grace of God, because they flow from his grace, and are the effects of it—as the Gospel, (2 Cor. vi. 1. Gal. v. 4. Tit. ii. 11.) gifts for preaching the Gospel, (Rom. xii. 6. Eph. iii. 7, 8.) the blessings of grace, as justification, adoption, &c. (Psalm lxxxiv. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9.) the several graces of the Spirit in regeneration, as faith, hope, love, &c. (2 Cor. ix. 8. Gal. ii. 9.) But these are to be distinguished from grace in God as the Giver from the gift, the Fountain from the streams, the Cause from the effect. The grace of God arises from the goodness of his nature, and not from any thing in the

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creature; and is exercised according to his sovereign will and pleasure. *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.* (Exod. xxxiii. 19.) It is *independent* of all merit and worth in creatures, and is entirely free. As an attribute, it wholly and only *resides* in God; and is only seen in men, as to the sense and perception of it, and the effects of it upon them and in them. (Rom. v. 5. and viii. 38.) It is only exhibited and *displayed through* Christ, in and through whom men are elected, adopted, redeemed, justified, pardoned, regenerated and sanctified. (Eph. i. 4, 5, 6, 7. Rom. iii. 24. Tit. iii. 5, 6.) And though there are various gifts and blessings, and effects of it, it is but *one* in God—there is but one Fountain, from whence they all flow.

With respect to creatures, the objects of it, some distinctions are made concerning it, as of natural and supernatural grace. *Natural* grace seems to sound oddly, and unless guarded against, may tend to confound nature and grace together; but rightly applied and understood, may be admitted. What Adam enjoyed, in a state of integrity, above the rest of creatures, was all owing to the unmerited kindness and goodness of God, and so may be called grace—as the image of God, in which he was created, his holiness and righteousness, his knowledge and understanding, the communion he had with God, and his dominion over the creatures. So many things which his posterity in their fallen state enjoy, being altogether owing to the free favour and undeserved goodness of God, may be called grace. To have a being, and life, and the mercies of life—as food and raiment —of which men are altogether unworthy,

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are gifts and favours, and so may bear the name of grace, though only natural blessings. *Supernatural* grace includes all the blessings of grace bestowed upon any of the sons of fallen Adam, and all the graces of the Spirit wrought in them. But it is difficult to perceive that Adam had any such, in a state of innocence.

Again, grace is, by some, distinguished into *common* or *general*, and *special* or *particular*. *Common* or *general* grace, if it may be so called, is what all men have—as the light of nature and reason, which every man that comes into the world is enlightened with; the temporal blessings of life; the bounties of providence, called the riches of God's goodness, or grace, (Rom. ii. 4,) which all partake of, more or less. (Tim. iv. 10.) *Special* or *particular* grace, is that which is peculiar to some persons only—such as electing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, adopting and sanctifying grace. (Rom. viii. 30.) And this special grace is, by some, distinguished into *imputed* and *inherent* grace. *Imputed* grace is the holiness, obedience and righteousness of Christ imputed to justification; and *inherent* grace is what is wrought in the heart, by the Spirit of God, in regeneration. But these distinctions, with others, only concern the effects of the grace of God; that itself is but one in God, and is sure, firm and immutable, as his nature; is the efficient cause, source and spring of all good things enjoyed by men; and should be acknowledged, as it was by the apostle, *By the grace of God I am what I am.* (1 Cor. xv. 10.) And this is the final cause or ultimate end of all that God does towards, upon or in his elect through Christ, all is *to the glory of his grace*, (Eph. i. 6.) which appears,

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shines forth and is illustrious in every part and branch of their salvation; and, therefore, they are said to be *saved by grace.* (Eph. ii. 5, 8.)

The grace of God appears in the election of men to everlasting life, and is, therefore, called the *election of grace;* is displayed in the covenant he has made with his elect in Christ, commonly called by us, *the covenant of grace;* is very manifest in the adoption of the chosen ones; shines very illustrious in redemption by Jesus Christ; and is very conspicuous in the justification of men before God, and acceptance with him.

The grace of God is abundantly evident in regeneration, vocation and sanctification. God regenerates men by his grace, and of his own good will and pleasure, (James i. 18.) and he calls them by his grace, and according to it. (Gal. i. 15. 2 Tim. i. 9.) External *gifts* of grace, as a rational knowledge of the Gospel, historical faith, and even gifts for the public ministry, which persons may have, and yet be unknown by Christ, and be cast-aways; and also *restraining grace,* whereby some of God's people, before conversion, and some others, are kept from the commission of gross sins, fall short of true sanctifying grace. And so with what some call *sufficient grace,* which should rather be called insufficient, for that can never be sufficient which is ineffectual, as the means of grace often are. There are other distinctions of grace, which are not very material, yet, if rightly explained and understood, may be allowed, as grace *preparing, preventing, operating,* and *co-operating,* and *subsequent. Preparing* grace must be understood only of God, who prepares the heart, and makes it by his grace, good ground, fit to receive the seed of the word. *Pre-*

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venting grace is that which God goes beforehand with men, and enlightens their minds, teaches and instructs them in the knowledge of themselves and of Christ, it guides, directs and draws them to him. (John vi. 44, 45.) *Operating* grace is that by which God works in men, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure. (Phil. ii. 13.) *Co-operating* grace is that by which men act, being acted or wrought upon, and by which they run, being drawn. (Cant. i. 4.) And subsequent grace is that by which the work of grace is carried on, and performed until the day of Christ. (Phil. i. 6.) Though there seems to be no great need of these distinctions; the most proper epithet of the grace of God, as displayed in regeneration, vocation, and conversion, is, that it is *efficacious;* it never fails of its effects.

Lastly, *Eternal life* is the free gift of God, through Christ—a free-grace-gift through him. (Rom. vi. 23.) The introduction of all of the Lord's people into the enjoyment of it, will be attended with shouts and acclamations, crying *grace, grace, unto it!* (Zech. iv. 7,) and which will be the employment of saints to all eternity; and so the great and ultimate end of God in their salvation, will be answered, namely, *the glory of his grace.* (Eph. i. 6.)

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MERCY OF GOD.

THE Mercy of God differs, in some respects, both from the love and grace of God. From the love, in its objects and order of operation. Its objects, though the same,

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are regarded under different considerations. Love pitched itself originally on objects, in the pure mass of creatureship, as unfallen, though it continues with them in their fallen state, and through all the imperfections of this life, to eternal happiness, while mercy supposes its objects miserable, and so fallen. There is a difference in order of operation, for though they are together in God, the one as early as the other, yet love seems to work *by* mercy, and mercy *from* love. The objects being viewed as dead in sin, and for it, love excites mercy to quicken them with Christ, and in themselves; *God who is rich in mercy, for the great love*, &c. (Eph. ii. 4, 5.) Mercy also differs from grace; for though all mercy is grace, because it is free, unmerited, undeserved; yet all grace is not mercy.* Much grace and favour are shown to the elect angels, but no mercy, since they never were miserable, and so not objects of mercy.

The Properties of Mercy.

Mercy is natural and essential to God, it is his nature and essence. It is not to be considered as a passion, or affection in God, as it is in men, attended with grief and sorrow, with anguish and anxiety of mind for the party in misery. Hence the stoic philosophers† denied mercy to belong to good men, and so not to God. And, indeed, it does not belong to him in such sense, unless by an anthropopathy, or speaking after the manner of men; since he is free from all passion and perturbation of mind. The Latin word *Misericordia* signifies, as one‡ observes,

* Vid. Maccov. Theolog. Quæst. loc. 13. p. 32.

† Zeno apud Cicero. Oras. 23. pro Murænâ, Laert. in Vita ejus, l. 7. p. 512. Seneca de Clementia, l. 2. c. 4, 5, 6.

‡ Zanchius de Natura Dei, l. 4 c. 4. p. 372.

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having another's misery at heart; but not a miserable heart, or one made so by the misery of another, especially as applied to God, with whom it is only a propensity of his will to succour persons in distress, whether in a temporal or spiritual way. And this is as essential to him as is his goodness, of which it is a branch; and, therefore, as God is essentially, originally, independently and underivatively good, so is he in like manner merciful. This is one of the perfections which are in some measure imitable by creatures; *Be ye merciful as your Father is merciful.* (Luke vi. 36.) The Socinians* deny that mercy is essential to God, supposing that mercy and justice are opposite, and unwilling to allow that justice is essential to God, which they think they must grant, if mercy is allowed; which would establish the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, and make that necessary —a doctrine which they do not choose to embrace. But these attributes are not opposed to each other. A man may be just and yet merciful, merciful and yet just. But though mercy is natural and essential to God, it is not naturally and necessarily borne towards, and exercised on every object in misery; for then all would share in it, that are in misery, even all wicked men and devils; whereas it is certain they do not. But it is guided in its exercise by the love of God; and governed and influenced by his sovereign will, who *hath mercy on whom he will have mercy;* (Rom. ix. 15, 18.) just as omnipotence is essential to God, but is not necessarily put forth to do everything it could.

Mercy being essential to God, or his nature and essence, nothing out of himself can be the cause of it.

* Socinus de Servatore, l. 1. par. 1. c. 1. Prælectiones, c. 16. Racov. Catechism c. 8. qu. 20.

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The misery of a creature is not the cause of mercy in God; who is not to be moved and wrought upon as creatures are, being a most simple act, and having no passive power to work upon. Nor are those to whom mercy is shown, more deserving than those to whom it is not, but oftentimes less deserving and more vile and sinful. (Rom. iii. 9. Eph. ii. 3. 1 Cor. vii. 11. 1 Tim. i. 13.) Nor are even the merits of Christ, or his obedience, sufferings, and death, the cause of mercy in God, for they are the fruits and effects of it, and flow from it, it is *through the tender mercy of our God, that the day-spring from on high hath visited us.* (Luke i. 78.) The mercy of God arises from the goodness of his nature, from his special love to his people and from his sovereign will and pleasure, who, as he loves whom he pleases, and "is gracious to whom he will be gracious;" "so he has mercy on whom he will have mercy." (Exod. xxxiii. 19.)

The mercy of God is infinite; as his nature is infinite, so are each of his attributes. And this appears both by bestowing an infinite good on men, which is Christ, and by his delivering them from an infinite evil, sin. For sin, though as an act of the creature, is finite, is objectively, infinite, as it is committed against God, the infinite Being.

The mercy of God is eternal. The eternity of mercy is expressed in the same language as the eternity of God himself.

It is common to all the three divine persons. Mercy is ascribed to the God and Father of Christ, (1 Pet. i. 3.) and to our Lord Jesus Christ; not only as Man and Mediator, but as the true God and eternal life, (Jude v. 21.) and to the blessed Spirit, who helps the infirmities of the saints.

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Mercy is displayed only in and through Christ. God out of Christ is a consuming fire. It is only in him God proclaims his name, "a God gracious and merciful;" he is the mercy-seat, and throne of grace, at which men obtain mercy and find grace. He is the channel through which it flows, and through whom it, in its effects, is conveyed to the sons of men. They are right who cast themselves not on the absolute mercy of God out of Christ, but upon his mercy, as displayed in him, as did the Publican (Luke xviii. 13.)

The Objects of Mercy.

The mercy of God is general and special. With respect to the general mercy of God, all creatures are its objects; *the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* (Psalm cxlv. 9.)

As to the special mercy of God, none are its objects but the elect, who are called *vessels of mercy,* (Rom. ix. 23.) because they are filled with it. These, as they are redeemed by Christ, share in the special mercy and goodness of God, and may expect a continuance and larger discoveries and displays thereof.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LONG-SUFFERING OF GOD.

THE long-suffering of God, like his forbearance and patience, arises from his mercy, of which it is a display or manifestation. By the Cabalistic Jews it is said to

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belong to the predicament of *Chesed*, or mercy,* and it may be observed, that wherever God is said to be long-suffering, he is represented as gracious and merciful. The Hebrew word, which literally signifies *long of both nostrils*, is sometimes rendered long-suffering, as in the places referred to; and sometimes *slow to anger*, (Nehem ix. 17. Psalm cjii. 8.) to which the Greek words *makrothumew* and *makrothumid* in the New Testament, answer. (Rom. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9, 15.) The allusion is to the nose, which indicates serenity or anger, as it is long or contracted.

God is sometimes called the God of patience, (Rom. xv. 5,) not only because he is the author and object of the grace of patience, but because he is patient, or long-suffering in himself, and towards his creatures, and is a pattern of patience to them; for this is one of the attributes of God, in which he may in some measure be imitated. (Eph. iv. 1, 2; Col. iii. 12.) This is not to be considered as a quality, accident, passion or affection in God, as it is in creatures, who bear with patience things grievous, distressing and torturing to them; (Col. i. 11.) but it is the very nature and essence of God, which is free from all passion and perturbation, from all suffering, grief and pain. It springs from his goodness, is as essential to him as that, is joined with it, (Rom. ii. 4,) and is nothing else than a moderation and restraint of his anger, a deferring of its effects for a while, according to his sovereign will. It is an extension and prolongation of mercy for a season, and differs thus: that the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, but the long-suffering of God, as to its exercise, is only for a

* Lexic. Cabalist. p. 155.

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time, until some certain end is answered, in which it issues, either in the damnation and destruction of the wicked, when they are fitted for it, (Rom. ix. 22.) or in the salvation of the righteous. (2 Pet. iii. 15.)

The long-suffering of God is exercised towards his chosen people. They are the *us* towards whom he is said to be *long-suffering*, in 2 Pet. iii. 9, even who are called beloved, v. 8. And being the beloved and chosen of God, it was his will that none of them should perish, but that all should come to repentance; even all of the same character, and of the same company and society, the whole election of grace; and until every one of these is called and brought to repentance, God is, and will be, long-suffering towards them; and long-suffering to the world for their sakes. Wherefore that Christ comes not sooner to judgment, is not owing to any negligence, dilatoriness, or slackness in God, concerning the promise of it, but to the long-suffering of God; which has been eminently displayed with respect to the people of God.

The Old Testament dispensation is expressly called *the forbearance of God*. (Rom. iii. 25.) The case stood thus: Christ in eternity became the Surety, engaged to assume their nature, pay their debts and make satisfaction for their sins. This was notified immediately after the fall of Adam, (Gen. iii. 15.) but it was four thousand years from thence to the time fixed in Daniel's prophecy, "to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness;" to the fulness of time when Christ should come to redeem all his people, and particularly, to obtain the redemption of transgressions that were under

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the first Testament. (Dan. ix. 24. Gal. iv. 4. Heb. ix. 15.) Now all this time was a time of patience, forbearance and long-suffering with God to his people. He did not stir up his wrath, and execute it on them; but reserved it for his Son, their Surety. He forbore to inflict the punishment which their sins deserved; he did not impute sin, place it to their account, charge it on them and demand of them satisfaction; but placed it to his Son's account, and expected satisfaction from him. He accepted of the sacrifices of slain beasts, as vicarious ones in their stead, though they had no true value, nor real efficacy to atone for sin—were only typical of Christ's sacrifice; and to continue, until that should be offered up. God waited till he should come and make his soul an offering for sin, and, upon his credit, bore with them, and bestowed the blessings of his grace. They were justified by him on the foot of Christ's righteousness to be wrought out; and their sins pardoned, through his atoning sacrifice to be offered up. They were saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, even as we are, and we as they; they were carried to heaven, and glorified, before the payment of their debts was made by their Surety, before satisfaction for their sins was given to justice, and before the actual redemption was obtained.

In and towards every one and all of his people in their state of unregeneracy, in every age and period of time, or of whatsoever nation, or under whatsoever dispensation they are, the Lord bears with them, whilst in a state of nature, waiting patiently all that while to be gracious to them. (Isia. xxx. 18.)

The apostle Paul is a remarkable instance of God's long-suffering which was exercised towards him through-

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out all his blasphemy of Christ, and his persecution of the saints. He waited, through all, to be gracious to him. Paul himself says, *For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* (1 Tim. i. 16.)

The long-suffering of God is exercised towards the ungodly, even towards *the vessels of wrath* whom he *endures with much long-suffering*, till they are fitted to destruction. (Rom. ix. 22.) This appears by his supporting them in their being, notwithstanding their grievous provocations, which are such, that it is amazing he does not at once strike them dead, as he did Ananias and Sapphira. The ends of such dealings are in part God's own glory; *to show his wrath and make his power known;* to vindicate him from all cruelty and injustice, (Rom. ix. 17, 22.) and in part for the sake of his own people who dwell among the wicked, that they may not suffer with them. Thus he would have spared Sodom, had there been ten righteous men in it, for their sakes. He forbears to take vengeance on those that have shed the blood of his saints, until the number of his elect, in like manner, are fulfilled; and he spares a wicked world from being burnt up and destroyed, until all his chosen ones are brought to repentance. (Gen. xviii. 32. Rev. vi. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 9.) Another end is, that the wicked themselves may be rendered inexcusable, and the execution of wrath on them at last, appears just and righteous. (Rom. ii. 1, 4, 5.)

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

HAVING treated of love, grace, mercy and long-suffering, it will be proper to take some notice of *God's* goodness, from whence all those proceed. For that God loves any of his creatures, in the manner he does, bestows favors upon them, shows mercy to them, and bears much with them, is owing to the goodness of his nature. Hence one of the names and titles by which he is described and made known, is that of *Good; thou, Lord, art good.* (Psalm lxxxvi. 5.) Philo says,* God is the name of goodness. And our English word *God* seems to be a contraction of the word *Good;* or, however, is the same with the German *Gott* and *Godt;* which came, it is thought,† from the Arabic word *Gada,* which so signified; so that the German and English name of the divine Being, in common use, is taken from the attribute of his goodness. The name the heathens give to their supreme deity, is *optimus,*‡ the *best;* he being not only good, as they supposed, and better than others, but the best of beings. Our Jehovah, the true God, is superlatively good; good in the highest degree, good beyond all conception and expression. Cotta in Cicero,§ charges Epicurus with taking away

* Leg. Alleg. l. 2. p. 74.

† Vid. Hinckelman. Præfat. ad Alkoran.

‡ Optimus maximus quidem ante optimus, id est, beneficentissimus quam maximus, Cicero de Natura Deorum, l. 2.

§ Ibid. l. 1. prope finem.

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from God the property of the best and most excellent nature, by denying the grace and goodness of God; for what, says he, is better, or what is more excellent, than goodness and beneficence? It is a common notion, Sallustius says,* that God is good; and Simplicius† calls him the goodness of goodnesses.

Goodness is essential to God; without which he would not be God; he is by nature good,‡ and is solely good. *There is none good but one, that is God*, is the assertion of Christ, (Matt. xix. 17.) which is to be understood not to the exclusion of the Son and the Spirit of God, who are with the Father the one God, and so equally good; but with respect to creatures, who are not of themselves good.

God is infinitely good. Finite minds cannot comprehend his goodness. It is so perfect that nothing can be added to it—is immutable and eternal. The goodness of creatures is but as the morning cloud, and early dew, but the goodness of God is invariably the same, and endures continually. And though there has been, and are, such large communications of it to creatures, it is the same as ever, and remains an inexhaustible fountain.

The goodness of God is communicative and diffusive. He is good, and he does good; "the whole earth is full of his goodness," (Psalm cxix. 68. and xxxiii. 5.) and there is not a creature that partakes not of it. A heathen writer§ argues the goodness of God from the existence of the world—since it is by the goodness of God the world is, God must be always good.

* De Diis, c. 1.
† In Epictetum.
‡ Hierocles in Carmin. Pythag. p. 21.
§ Sallust de Diis, c. 7.

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This attribute belongs to each divine person, Father, Son and Spirit. When Christ says, *there is none good but one, that is God*, it is to be understood not of God personally considered, or of one person, to the exclusion of the other; but of God essentially; and the design of Christ was, to raise the mind of the young man to whom he spoke, to a higher opinion of him, not as a mere man, whom as such, he called good; but as the true God, to whom this epithet, in its highest sense only belongs.

The goodness of God, like his love and mercy, as to its several objects, may be considered as general and special. The general goodness is as extensive as his mercy; *The Lord is good to all.* (Psalm cxlv. 9.) All creatures as they came from him are *very good*, and all partake of his goodness in a thousand ways. Of special goodness, which is sovereign and distinguishing, elect angels and elect men only partake. God is good to the elect angels, in choosing them in Christ, preserving them from apostacy, confirming them in their estate, and in many other peculiar favours; when the angels that sinned are not spared by him, but are reserved to judgment. (1 Tim. v. 21. 2 Pet. ii. 4.) Elect men, the spiritual and mystical Israel of God, have a share in his special goodness. And yet among them there are different displays of divine goodness in the present state, some have greater spiritual gifts for usefulness than others; some have larger measures of grace; though they have all the same grace, yet not to the same degree, which must be referred to his sovereign good-will and pleasure.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE ANGER AND WRATH OF GOD

Among the affections may be classed the anger and wrath of God, which are often used promiscuously in Scripture, to signify the same thing, and sometimes seem to be distinct. According to our notion of them, they may be distinguished. Anger is a low degree of wrath, and wrath is the height of anger.

The Anger of God.

That Anger belongs to God, or may be predicated of him, is denied by some philosophers of the Cynic and Stoic sects, bacause it is a passion; they allow grace, good-will, and benificence in God to men, but not anger. This they suppose to be a weakness, and even a sort of madness,* which is unbecoming a wise and good man, and much more unbecoming Deity. The Epicureans deny that God shows either favor and good-will, or anger and wrath; for they imagine he has no concern in the affairs of men. But the Scriptures everywhere ascribe anger to God, and often speak of it, as being kindled against particular persons, and against bodies of men. But anger is not a passion, or affection in God, as in men. When God is said to be angry, there is no commotion, perturbation, pain or uneasiness as in human minds. Anger in God is but a

* Vide Senecam de Ira, l. 1. c. 1. Sallustium de Diis, c. 14. et Demophili Sentent. p. 8. Ed Gale.

† Vide Lactartium de ira Dei. c. 4. et 5.

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displacency with sin, and with sinners, on its account. As it is often said in Scripture, that such a thing displeased him, or was evil, and not right in his sight. (Numb. xi. 1. 2. Sam. xi. 27. Psalm lx. 1. Isa. lix. 15.) All sins is displeasing to God. He can take no pleasure in nor look upon it with delight. There are some sins which more especially provoke him to anger; as the sins against the first table of the law, particularly idolatry, which, of all sins, is the most provoking to him; since it strikes at his very being, and robs him of his glory, (Deut. xxxii. 16, 21. Judg. ii. 12, 13. 1 Kings xvi. 33.) Likewise distrust of the power and providence of God, murmuring at and complaining of it; which was often the case of the Israelites.

As to the objects of his anger, *God is angry with the wicked every day*, (Psalm vii. 11.) because they are daily sinning against him. Their whole lives are one continued series and course of wickedness. All they do is sin; their very actions in civil life, the *ploughing* of the wicked, is sin. All their religious services are but *splendida peccata*, shining sins, and so are displeasing to God, and resented by him. Their sacrifices, brought with a wicked mind, without a right principle, and a right end, are an abomination to him. (Prov. xxi. 4, 27.) Yet they do not always appear under the visible and public tokens of his resentment. The rod of God is not on them; nor are they in trouble, as other men, but have often more than heart can wish, families, flocks, herds, and riches, and spend their days in health, wealth and pleasure. (Job. xxi. 7—13. Psalm lxxiii. 3—12.) They seem as if they were the favorites of heaven, and think themselves to be such. But though God is slow

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to anger, or moves slowly to express it, yet he will most certainly do it in the issue; and though men may promise themselves impunity in sin, and fancy they shall have peace when they walk after the imagination of their hearts, and add sin to sin; yet at length God will not spare them; but his anger and jealousy shall smoke against them, and all the curses written in the law shall come upon them. (Deut. xxix. 19, 20.)

Moreover, God is angry with his own special people, holy and good men. We read of his anger being kindled against Aaron and Miriam, for speaking against Moses; and against Moses and Aaron, for not sanctifying him before the children of Israel; and against David Solomon, and others, for sins committed by them. And this is not at all inconsistent with the love of God to them. Anger is not opposite to love. God loves his people with an everlasting and unchangeable love, and yet may be angry, that is, displeased, and show his resentment at sin by chastisement, for even that is done in love Now this apparent anger, or appearance of anger, *endures but for a moment*, (Psalm xxx. 5.) though God hides his face from his people, and chides them for their sins; yet he does not keep anger for ever.

The Wrath of God.

This is *the heat of his great anger*, (Deut. xxix. 24.) not only kindled and incensed, but blown up into a flame; it is the *indignation* of his anger, the *fury* and *fierceness* of it. (Isa. xxx. 30. and xlii. 25. Hos. xi. 9.) It seems to be his punitive justice, and includes his will to punish sinners according to the demerit of their sins in strict justice—his threatenings and actual execution

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of it; which is the vengeance that belongs to him, even his vindictive wrath, or judgment.

There is a temporary wrath executed in the present life; of which there have been many instances and examples, and will be more; and a brief review of some will give a more enlarged idea of the wrath of God. Passing the case of the apostate angels, whom God has cast down to hell; and of whom not one has been spared, or has shared in pardoning grace and mercy, we may observe examples which relate to mankind. Take first the condemnation of Adam, and all his posterity, for the first sin, for only one single sin. How great must that sin be! how greatly must the divine Being be incensed by it! in that, for it, he has caused death, that is, his wrath to pass sententially on him, and all his offspring; so that, in consequence of it, all the children of Adam are the children of God's wrath. Then came the drowning of the old world, when full of violence and corruption; so that God repented he had made man in it, it grieved him to the heart; and in his wrath he determined to destroy man and beasts in it. Then followed another, limited to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and others of the plain, whose inhabitants provoked the eyes of God's glory to such a degree, that he rained fire and brimstone from heaven upon them; and set them as an example and emblem of mens' suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. In the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, for not letting Israel go, the Psalmist says, "he cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, indignation and trouble." (Psalm lxxviii. 49, 50.) The children of Israel themselves often provoked the Lord to wrath; and brought it down upon them, for their sins; as at

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Horeb, when they made the calf; at Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth-hattaavah, where they murmured against the Lord, (Deut. ix. 8, 19, 22.) as they did likewise at the report of the spies, concerning the land of Canaan; when "God swore in his wrath, they should not enter into his rest." And again, upon Korah and his accomplices, wrath went forth from the Lord, and the plague began. (Num. xiv. 23. and xvi. 46.) Witness, also, their several captivities; and their last captivity and destruction by the Romans; when wrath came upon them to the uttermost; and under which wrath, and in which captivity they are to this day. Whenever the four sore judgments of God, the sword, famine, pestilence and wild beasts, have been exercised in the world, as they often have been, they are always in wrath; and these with earthquakes, and such-like uncommon events, are presignifications and foretokens of greater wrath yet to come. And in a little while, the seven vials full of the wrath of God, will be poured forth on antichrist, and on the antichristian states; and the judgment of God will come on Babylon in one day. And when the end of all things shall come, the earth and all in it will be burnt with fire, and the heavens melt away with fervent heat. The day of the Lord will burn like an oven, and the wicked, like stubble, will be burnt up by it, and will have neither root nor branch left. But it is most fully demonstrated in what our Lord Jesus Christ suffered as the Surety of his people, in their room and stead; when, their sins being imputed to him, were found on him, and he was stricken for them; the sword of justice was sheathed in him; the vindictive wrath of God was poured forth upon him, to the uttermost of the

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demerit of sin; God spared him not—how unconceivably great must his wrath be against sin, when God spared not in the least his own dearly beloved Son, but suffered him to be put to the most exquisite pain, both in body and soul, for the sins of his people!

The Scriptures speak of future wrath; wrath that will take place in the life which is to come; which in part, commences at the death of wicked men, and will be complete at their resurrection from the dead. (Matt. iii. 7. 1 Thess. i. 10.) This is expressed by fire, than which nothing is more intolerable; even devouring fire and everlasting burnings, not to be endured. This is the curse of the law broken, which not only reaches to this life, but to that which is to come. It is the second death, which lies in a separation from God, and in a sense of his hot displeasure. It is called hell and hell-fire, the word for which, in the New Testament, is taken from Ge-hinnom, or the valley of Hinnom; where the Jews burnt their children in sacrifice to Moloch; and which place, from the beating of drums in it, that the shrieks of the children might not be heard by their parents, was called Tophet; of which the prophet says as an emblem of hell-fire, or the fire of divine wrath: *Tophet is ordained of old—the pile thereof is fire, and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it,* (Isa. xxx. 33.)—an awful representation of the wrath of God. And by whatsoever term this state of wrath is expressed, it is always spoken of as continuing forever. It is called everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, everlasting destruction, "the smoke of torment that ascends for ever and ever."

As to the objects of this wrath, seeing it is revealed

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against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, it lies against all that are unrighteous and ungodly; and as all have sinned, and are under sin, all are *children of wrath.* (Eph. ii. 3. Rom. i. 18. and iii. 9, 23.) But there are some particularly described, on whom this wrath comes, and they are called *children of disobedience,* (Eph. v. 5, 6. Col. iii 5, 6.) who are disobedient to the light of nature—to the law of God—and who are disobedient to the Gospel of Christ. *He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* In short, the wrath of God comes upon men either for their sins against the light of nature, or against the law of God, or against the Gospel of Christ.

There are some on whom no wrath comes here, nor hereafter; who are the vessels of mercy, afore-prepared for glory; concerning whom Jehovah says, *fury is not in me.* Their afflictions and chastisements are all in love; and there will be no curse hereafter; but they shall always see the face of God, and be "in his presence, where are fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore." (Rev. iii. 19. and xxii. 3, 4.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HATRED OF GOD.

THERE are some* who deny that God does or can hate, which is correct as it relates to the creatures of God as such; for as they are made by him they are all very good; and are loved, delighted in, and not hated by

* Aquinas contr. Gentiles, l. c. 96. Vid. Francisc. Silvestor in ibid.

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him. Yet the Scriptures do, in many places, attribute to him hatred to both persons and things. (Psalm v. 5. Zech. viii.) And this may be concluded from the love of God, as has been shown. Where there is love there will be a hatred of that which is contrary to the object loved. Thus good men, as they love the good, so they hate that which is evil; they love God, the chief good; and they hate sin, the chief evil, as diametrically opposite to him. (Psalm xcvii. 10. Amos v. 15.) So the righteous Lord, as he loves righteousness and righteous people; so he hates unrighteousness, and unrighteous men; for to the Son of God he saith, *thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath annointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* (Psalm xlv. 7.) And it may be added, that hatred, when ascribed to God, sometimes signifies merely his will to punish sin and sinners, (Psalm v. 5, 6,) and so is an act of punitive justice; *And is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?*

The thing God hates is sin, which is no creature of his. All the creatures he made were very good, but sin was not among them. All sin is an abomination to him; but there are some sins particularly observed as hated by him, as idolatry, (Deut. xvi. 22. Jer. xliv. 3, 4, 5,) perjury, (Zech. viii. 17,) insincere and hypocritical acts of worship, (Isa. i. 14, 15. Amos v. 21,) sins against the two tables of the law; as murder, (Prov. vi. 16, 17, 18,) fornication, adultery, community of wives, and the deeds of the Nicolaitains, he is said to hate. (Rev. ii. 6, 15.) And so with theft, robbery, rapine and violence of every sort, all kind of injury to the persons and properties of men, (Psalm xi. 5. Isa. lxi. 8,) and every evil

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thing a man may imagine against his neighbour. (Zech. viii. 17.)

The persons God hates are sinners, *workers of iniquity*, (Psalm v. 5,) not men, *as* men, but as *sinful* men. And it is not all who sin, for then all would be hated, for all have sinned in Adam, and by actual transgressions, and none are without, (Rom. iii. 23. 1 John. i. 8,) but *workers* of it, traders in it, whose whole lives are one continued series of sinning. To these it will be said, *I never knew you;* I never loved you, I always hated you; *depart from me ye that work iniquity.* (Matt. vii. 23.) The Scriptures speak of a hatred of some persons antecedent to sin and without the consideration of it; which, though it may be attended with some difficulty to account for; yet may be understood in a sense consistent with the perfections of God, and with what has been said of his hatred of sin and sinners. It is said of Jacob and Esau, personally, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* (Mal. i. 2.) The apostle expressly says, Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13, *The children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand; not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her,* to Rebekah, the mother of them, whilst they were in her womb, *the elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* And what is said of these, is true of all the objects of election and non-election. And now let it be observed, that this hatred is to be understood, not of any positive hatred in the heart of God towards them, but of a negative and comparative hatred of them; that while some are

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chosen of God, and preferred by him, and are appointed to obtain grace and glory, and to be brought to great dignity and honor; others are passed by, neglected and postponed, which is called hatred, that is, a comparative hatred—in comparison with the love shown, and the preference given to others. In this sense the word is used in Luke xiv. 26. *If any man hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;* the meaning of which cannot be, that a man must have positive hatred of such near relations, and of his own life; but that he should be negligent of these in comparison with Christ; have a less affection for them and so prefer him to them. In like sense are we to understand the expression concerning Esau, and all reprobates. That this may appear yet clearer, it should be observed, that in this there are two acts of the divine will. The one is a will not to bestow benefits of special goodness; and which God may do antecedent to, and without any consideration of sin; since he is under no obligation to confer benefits, but may bestow them on whom he pleases; as he himself says, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* (Matt. xx. 15.) The other act of the divine will is, to inflict evil; and that is always for sin; for though sin is not the cause of the act of the will, it is the cause of the thing willed. In the one act, hatred, or a denial of grace, is without the consideration of sin; in the other, hatred, or a will to punish, is with it; punishment being only willed for it. But God never hates his elect in any sense. They are always loved by him; to which hatred is opposite. He may be angry with and chastise them for their sins.

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He may, as he says, and as they apprehend, *in a little wrath, hide his face* from them, but he never hates them. Though he hates their sins, and shows his resentment therefor, he still loves themselves freely, renews and raises them up by repentance, when fallen into sin, and manifests and applies his pardoning grace to them.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE JOY OF GOD.

JOY, which is often attributed to God in the Scriptures, bears some resemblance to the affection of joy in men. Like other affections that are ascribed to God, it only relates to effects. Joy is expressed by him in effects greatly differing—as in inflicting punishment, as well as in conferring benefits. In the one he rejoices in the glory of his justice and holiness; and in the other, in the displays of his grace and goodness. (Deut. xxviii. 63.) Joy, as ascribed to God, seems to be no other than delight and complacency.

And this he takes in himself, in his own nature, and its perfections. Hence Aquinas,* who defines joy and delight to be a certain quiet or rest of the will, observes that God must greatly rest quiet and satisfied in himself, which is his principal *volitum*, or what is willed by him, as having all-sufficiency in him, and, therefore, by his own will, greatly rejoices and delights in himself.

He rejoices and takes delight and complacency in his

* Contr. Gentiles, l. 1. c. 90.

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works. (Psalm civ. 31.) The works of creation, when he had finished, he not only rested from, but rested in with delight and pleasure; he looked over, and pronounced them all very good. And he still appears to have pleasure in them, by his continuance of them in being, by upholding all things by the word of his power. He rejoices and delights in the works of his providence, in which he is always concerned. (John v. 17.) These, so far as they are known by men, yield an unspeakable delight and pleasure in contemplation; but what delight must God take in them, by whom they are seen and known in their beauty, harmony and connection; as are their springs, causes and ends. God rejoices and takes delight particularly in the great work of redemption, contrived by his infinite wisdom, and wrought out by his Son; partly because of his own glory displayed therein, and partly because of the salvation of his people, secured thereby. And he rejoices and delights in his work of grace on the hearts of his people. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.* (Psalm cxlvii. 11; see Cant. iv. 9, 10.) And the Son of God was from all eternity rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth; and his delights were with the sons of men. (Prov. viii. 31.) This joy he felt under all his sorrows and sufferings, when working out their salvation, (Heb. xii. 2,) and which he expresses at their conversion; that being the time of finding his lost people. And they will also be his joy, and crown of rejoicing, in the last day.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

HAVING considered those attributes of God which bear likeness to affections in men, we proceed to consider those which in them may be called virtues—as holiness, justice, or righteousness, truth, or faithfulness.

Holiness the Scriptures most clearly ascribe to God. He is frequently called *holy*, and *the holy One*. (Isa. xl. 25; Hos. xi 9.) Holiness is the purity and rectitude of his nature, which is so pure as to be without spot or stain.

Holiness is an essential attribute, for he is holiness itself. It has been thought to be not so much a particular and distinct attribute of itself, as it is the lustre, glory and harmony of all the rest; and is what is called *the beauty of the Lord*, (Psalm xxvii. 4,) as it is the beauty of the good angels, and of regenerate men. And, indeed, without holiness, what is wisdom or knowledge, but craft and cunning? or what is power, but tyranny, oppression and cruelty? And as it is his nature and essence, it is nfinite and unbounded; and can neither be increased nor diminished. He is the fountain of holiness to all rational creatures that partake of it. The holiness of creatures is but a shadow of holiness, in comparison with that of God. The holy angels are chargeable with folly in his sight. God only is essentially, originally, underivatively, perfectly and immutably holy.

This relates not to one person in the Deity, to the

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exclusion of the rest; not to the Spirit, though he is peculiarly called the *holy Ghost*, and the holy Spirit; so not to the Father, to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; for as they are the one God, who is a Spirit, they partake of the same common and undivided nature, and all the perfections of it. And no doubt respect is had to the holiness of the three divine persons, by the seraphim, when they said, *holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!* (Isa. vi. 3,) and by the four beasts, or living creatures, continually employed in the same divine service, celebrating the perfections of God in much the same language, saying, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty!* (Rev. iv. 8.) Our Lord addresses the *Father*, under the epithet of *holy Father*, (John xvii. 11,) and all that has been said of the holiness of God belongs to him, and is as true of the Son as of the Father; since he is of the same nature, and is "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." He is called "the holy one of Israel," more than thirty times in the prophecy of Isaiah. The devil himself says to him; *I know thee who thou art, the holy One of God.* (Luke iv. 34.) Besides, Christ is not only holy in his human nature, even perfectly so, and sanctified and set apart to his office as Mediator, by his Father—for which office holiness is a necessary requisite and qualification—but he is the Fountain of holiness to his church and people. They are sanctified in him and by him; he is made sanctification to them. (John i. 14, 16.)

The holiness of God is displayed in his works, and in his actions and proceedings towards his creatures. God is *holy in all his works;* or his holiness is manifest in and by them. (Psalm cxlv. 17.)

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In the works of creation it appears, for he pronounced them very *good*. As for man, he was made after the image, and in the likeness of God, a pure, holy and upright creature.

The holiness of God appears in his works of providence, though many of them are dark and intricate. The principal objection made to the holiness of God in his providences, is his suffering sin to be in the world. But though it is by his voluntary permission, or permissive will, yet he is neither the author nor abettor of it; he neither commands it nor approves of it, nor tempts nor forces to it, but the reverse; he forbids it, disapproves of it, dissuades from it, threatens to punish for it, yea, even chastizes his own people for it; and besides, overrules it for great good, and for his own glory. The covenant which he has made with his son Jesus Christ, on the behalf of the chosen ones, provides abundantly for their holiness, both internal and external; (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27,) and the promises serve greatly to promote it, and to influence the saints to be "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

The holiness of the Son of God is to be seen in his giving himself to sanctify his church, and make it glorious, without spot or wrinkle, through his blood and righteousness; in redeeming his people from all iniquity, to purify them to himself a peculiar people; in bearing their sins, and making satisfaction for them that they might live unto righteousness, and that the body of sin might be destroyed, (Eph. v. 25, 27; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Pet. ii. 24; Rom. vi. 6.) And so in the execution of all his offices—as a Prophet, he has appeared to be a holy one; the faith delivered by him to the saints, is a

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most holy faith, wholesome words, doctrines according to godliness; as a Priest, he is holy and harmless, separate from sinners, and has offered up himself without spot to God; as a King, all his administrations are in purity and righteousness, and his laws, commands, and ordinances, are holy ones; and when he comes as judge of the world, he will appear without sin, and "judge the world in righteousness."

The holiness of the blessed Spirit, is manifest in the sanctification of the chosen of God, and the redeemed of the Lamb, which is, therefore, called, *the sanctification of the Spirit*, (2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2,) in convincing them of sin, of the evil nature and just demerit of it; in converting them from it; in calling them with a holy calling, and to holiness; and in carrying on and perfecting the work of sanctification in them, "without which none shall see the Lord."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE JUSTICE OR RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

The Scriptures ascribe this attribute, and all rational creatures, good and bad, acknowledge it. (Rev. xvi. 5; Exod. ix. 27; Jer. xii. 1; Dan. ix. 9; Psalm cxlv. 7.) Adam was righteous, but not of himself—God made him upright, or righteous. Saints are righteous, not by their own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. But God is righteous in and of himself; his righteousness is essential and inderivative, and is incommu-

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nicable to a creature. It is not that by which men are made righteous, as Osiander dreamed; for though he who is Jehovah is their righteousness, yet not as he is Jehovah; for then they would be deified by him. The righteousness of God being his nature, is infinite and immutable; the righteousness of angels and men, in which they were created, was mutable. Adam lost his, and many of the angels lost theirs; but the *righteousness* of God is *like the great mountains*, as high, firm and stable as they, and much more so. (Psalm xxxvi. 6.) Righteousness in creatures, is according to some law or rule to which it is conformed, and is adequate. The law of God, which is holy, just and true, is a rule of righteousness to men; but God has no law without himself, he is a law to himself; his nature and will are the law and rule of righteousness to him. Some things are just, because he wills them—such as those that are of a positive kind; and others he wills because they are just, being agreeable to his nature and moral perfections. This attribute must be common to the three Persons in the Godhead, since it is essential to Deity, and they partake of the same undivided nature and essence; hence the Father of Christ is called by him *righteous Father*, (John xvii. 25,) and Christ, his Son, is called Jesus Christ *the righteous*, (1 John ii. 1,) and no doubt can be made of its being proper to the holy Spirit, who *convinces men of righteousness and of judgment.* (John xvi. 8.)

We may consider the various sorts, or branches of righteousness, which belong to God; for though it is but one in him, being his nature and essence; yet it may be considered as diversified and as admitting of distinctions, with respect to creatures. Some distinguish it

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into righteousness of words, and righteousness of deeds. Righteousness of words lies in the fulfilment of his words, prophecies and promises; which is his veracity, truth and faithfulness; and which will be considered hereafter, as a distinct attribute. Righteousness of deeds is either the rectitude, purity and holiness of his nature; which appears in all his works and actions, and which has been treated of in the preceeding chapter; or it is a giving of that which belongs to himself, and to his creatures, what is to each their due. So justice is defined by Cicero,* an affection of the mind, *Suum cuique tribuens;* giving to every one his own. Justice, among men, is sometimes distinguished into commutative and retributive. Commutative justice lies in covenants, compacts, agreements, commerce and dealings with one another, in which one gives an equivalent in money or goods, for what he receives of another; and when integrity and uprightness are preserved, this is justice. But such a kind of justice cannot have place between God and men. What he gives, is of free favor and good will; and what they give to him is no equivalent for what they have from him; *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* (Psalm cxvi. 12.) Retributive justice is a distribution either of rewards or punishments, the one may be called remunerative justice, the other punitive justice.

Remunerative justice, or a distribution of rewards has not for its rule the merits of men, but his own gracious promise; for he first, of his own grace and good will, makes promises, and then he is just and righteous in fulfilling them. God, as Austin† expresses it, "makes

* De Finibus, l. v.

† Enarrat. in Psalm cix. tom. 8. p. 521.

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himself a debtor, not by receiving any thing from us, but by promising such and such things to us." And his justice lies in fulfilling his promises made to such and such persons, doing such and such things; and not in rewarding any supposed merits of theirs. Thus, for instance, *The man that endureth temptation shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him*, (James i. 12,) but the crown of life is not given according to any merit of it arising from enduring temptation, or loving the Lord; but in consequence of the promise of God graciously made to such persons, for their encouragement thereunto. Moreover, the reward is not of debt, but of grace; or God, in the distribution of rewards to men, rewards not their works, but his own grace; he first gives grace, and then rewards that grace with glory; called, *the reward of the inheritance*. (Col. iii. 24.) Indeed, the remunerative justice of God is sometimes represented in Scripture, as rendering to every man according to his deeds, or as his work shall be. (Rom. ii. 5, 6, 7, 10; Rev. xxii. 12.) But still it is to be observed, that the reward given or rendered, is owing to the promise that is made to them for *godliness*, whether as a principle of grace, or as practical under the influence of grace; or godly persons have *the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come*, (1 Tim. iv. 8,) which promise is punctually and righteously performed. Besides, God does not reward the works and godly actions of men, as meritorious in themselves; but as they are the fruits of his own grace; who works in them both *to will and to do* of his own pleasure; and, therefore, he is *not unrighteous to forget their work and labor of love;* which springs from love, is done in faith, and with a view to

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his glory. (Heb. vi. 10.) Moreover, the works according to which God renders eternal life, are not mens' own personal works, between which, and eternal life, there is no proportion; but the works of righteousness done by Christ, and according to these, the crown of righteousness is given them by the Lord, as a righteous Judge, in a way of righteousness. (2 Tim. iv. 8.)

Punitive, or vindictive justice, has been exercised by him in all ages from the beginning of the world. This the Socinians* deny, because they do not choose to embrace the doctrine of the necessity of Christ's satisfaction for sin. But that punitive, or vindictive justice is essential to God, or that he not only will not let sin go unpunished, but that he cannot but punish sin, is manifest—from the light of nature, from the word and nature of God, and from the nature and demerit of sin.

The righteousness of God is displayed in his ways and works of providence. He governs the world in righteousness, orders and disposes of all things in judgment; and though he does according to his sovereign will and pleasure in heaven and in earth, yet he acts according to the strictest rules of justice and equity; *Just and true* are his *ways;* he is *the Judge of all the earth*, who will do right. (Rev. xv. 3; Gen. xviii. 25.) Men may say as did the house of Israel; *the way of the Lord is not equal;* when it is their ways that are unequal. (Exek. xviii. 29.) It is not a sufficient objection to the righteousness of God in his providences, that good men are often afflicted, and wicked men are frequently in very prosperous circumstances. These things

* Socin. de Servatore, par. 1. c. 1. Prælection. Theolog. c. 16. Crellius de Deo, ejusque attributis, c. 25. in fine.

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have been puzzling to good men, who have not been able to reconcile them with the justice of God. (Psalm lxxiii. 4—13; Jer. xii. 1, 2.) As for the afflictions of God's people, these are not punishments for sins, but chastisements. Were they indeed punishments for sin, it would argue injustice, for it would be unjust to punish twice for the same sins—once in the Surety, and again in themselves. They flow not from his justice, but his love; and not to their detriment and injury, but for their good. And as for the prosperity of the wicked, though their eyes stand out with fatness, and they have more than heart can wish, yet they are like beasts that are fattened for the slaughter; their judgment may seem to linger, and their damnation to slumber, but they do not; sudden destruction will come upon them; the tables will ere long be turned, the saints, who have now their evil things, will be comforted; and the wicked, who have now their good things, will be tormented. There is a future state, where the justice of God will shine in all its glory.

God is righteous in all his ways, works and acts of grace; in the predestination of men, the choice of some, and the preterition of others. While the apostle is treating on this sublime subject, he stops and asks this question, *Is there unrighteousness with God?* and answers it with the utmost abhorrence and detestation, *God forbid!* Election is neither an act of justice, nor of injustice, but of the sovereign will and pleasure of God who does what he will with his own. If it is no injustice in men to choose their own favorites, friends, confidents and companions, it can be none in God to choose whom he pleases to bestow his favors upon; to

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indulge with communion with himself now, and to dwell with him to all eternity. Nor can the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity, be accounted an unrighteous act. God made man upright, man made himself a sinner. God constituted the first man the federal head and representative of all his posterity; and who so fit for this as their natural head and common parent, with and in whom they were to stand and fall. And what injustice could there be in that, since, had he stood, they would have partook of the benefits of it; as now he fell, they share in the miseries of it? And since they sinned in him, it can be no unrighteous thing to reckon it to them; or that they should be made and constituted sinners by his disobedience.

The justice of God shines brightly in redemption by Christ; "Zion, and her converts, are redeemed in righteousness;" a full price is paid for the redemption of them; and in it "mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other." In the justification of men, by the righteousness of Christ, the justice of God is very conspicuous; for though God justifies the ungodly, yet it is not without a perfect righteousness, such as is adequate to the demands of his righteous law; even the righteousness of his own Son, in the imputation of which, and justification by it, he appears to be *just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.* (Rom. iii. 26.)

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CHAPTER XXII.

THE VERACITY OF GOD.

THE apostle says, *Let God be true, and every man a liar*, (Rom. iii. 4.)—whatever is said of creatures, he is truth itself.

This attribute is expressive of the reality of his being. He truly and really exists; which every worshipper must believe. (Heb. xi. 6.) Creatures have but a shadow of being, in comparison with his; *Every man walks in a vain show*, or image, rather in appearance than in reality, (Psalm xxxix. 6,) but the existence of God is true, real and substantial. He is the true and the living God, in opposition to fictitious deities. This attribute of truth removes from him all imputation of lying and falsehood; he is not a man, that he should lie, the strength of *Israel will not* lie. He can neither deceive nor be deceived. Jeremiah, indeed, says, *O Lord thou hast deceived me and I was deceived*, (Jer. xx. 7,) but this must be understood either as a misapprehension and mistake of the prophet; or the sense is, *If I am deceived, God has deceived me; but as that cannot be, therefore I am not deceived;* though rather the words may be rendered, *thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded.* This attribute clears God of all insincerity, hypocrisy and dissimulation. It expresses the faithfulness of God; hence the terms true and faithful, are joined, when the sayings or words of God are spoken of.

The veracity of God is essential to him. He is not only called the God of truth, but *God the truth*, (Deut.

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xxxii. 4,) and Christ asserts himself to be the truth, (John xiv. 6,) and the Spirit is likewise so called. (1 John v. 6.) To be false, fallacious and insincere, would be to act contrary to his nature, even to deny himself.

That God's veracity is pure, perfect, eternal and immutable, all his attributes concur to prove. All his works are true, and his veracity is therein displayed, both by internal acts within himself, relative to himself, to the divine persons; and by external works, which are all true and real things.

His choice of persons to eternal life, is true, firm and real, the foundation of God, which stands sure; the covenant of grace made in Christ, full of blessings and promises, faithfully performed. Justification by his righteousness is really imputed to his people, by which they truly become righteous; and not in a putative and imaginary sense. And by adoption the saints are now really the sons of God—though it does not yet appear what they shall be.

God is true in his written word. The Scriptures are the Scriptures of truth, even the whole of them. (Dan. x. 21.) They are given by inspiration from God; are the breath of God, who is the God of truth, and therefore to be received, *not as the word of man, but as in truth the word of God.* And the truth and veracity of God appears in the fulfilment of the predictions, promises and threatenings contained in his word, which is the same with his faithfulness; of which we shall particularly treat in the next chapter. The veracity of God is the foundation of his faithfulness; and his faithfulness is a branch of it. They are often placed one for the other, and both are made to signify the same thing.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

FAITHFULNESS is an attribute that belongs to God; from whence he is denominated the *faithful God.* (Deut. vii. 9.) It is essential to him, and without it he would not be God. It is a most glorious perfection of his nature; it is *great*, like himself, yea, it is infinite—*Great is thy faithfulness.* (Lam. iii. 23.) There is faithfulness in the holy angels, and in good men, but not like God's; and, therefore, he puts no trust in them. (Job iv. 18.) His faithfulness is invariably the same; it has never failed in any one instance, nor ever will; it is established in the heavens and will continue to all generations. (Psalm lxxxix. 2, 24, 33, and cxix. 90; Josh. xxiii. 14.) He is the *faithful Creator*, and covenant God and Father of his people; to whom they may safely commit themselves, and depend upon him for all mercies promised, both temporal and spiritual. (1 Pet. iv. 19; 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.)

The faithfulness of God chiefly lies in the performance of his word, which is certain, with respect to all that is spoken by him; for *hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

1. It appears in the performance of what he has said with respect to the world in general—as, that it shall never more be destroyed by a flood, and for a token and confirmation of which God has set the rainbow in the cloud. Likewise that the revolutions of the time, and

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seasons of the year, shall keep their constant course; that, *while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.* (Gen. viii. 22.) And so it has always been, and still is, in one part of the world or another, according to the different climates. He has not left himself without a witness to his faithfulness, in all ages and nations, giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons; and so filling the hearts of his creatures with food and gladness; the eyes of whom wait upon him, and he gives them their meat in due season. (Acts xiv. 17; Psalm xxxvi. 5, 6, and cxlv. 15, 16.)

2. The faithfulness of God is displayed in Christ as in a mirror. It was said that he should be born of the seed of Abraham, from the tribe of Judah, out of the family of David, of a virgin at Bethlehem; should suffer and die, and work out the salvation of his people; which has been fully accomplished.

It is seen in his person, office and works. Common to each person in the Godhead, it shines resplendently in the Son of God, *the brightness of his Father's glory*, who has been *faithful to him that appointed him* to his office as Mediator. Moses was faithful in the house of God, as a servant; but Christ as a Son over his own house. (Heb. iii. 2—6.)

He engaged to be the Surety of his people; to stand in their place and stead; to do and suffer for them what should be required, and to take care of all their affairs for time and eternity. And that he came into the world, and has done this for sinners, is a *faithful saying;* in which the faithfulness of God in his promises, and of Christ in his engagements, is abundantly displayed.

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(1 Tim. i. 15.) He engaged to feed the flock of God, and to take the whole care and oversight of it; and he does feed his flock like a shepherd, and has shown himself to be the good and faithful one, by laying down his life for the sheep. (Zech. xi. 4. 7; Isa. xl. 11; John x. 14.)

Christ's faithfulness is also manifest in the fulfilment of his promises made to his disciples—as, that he would not leave them comfortless, but come and see them, as he did after his resurrection; that they should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which was bestowed on the day of Pentecost in a very extraordinary manner; that he would be with them in the administration of his word and ordinances; which he did, confirming the word by signs following. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 20.) He has promised his presence with his ministers and churches to the end of the world, and that even "where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them," (Matt. xviii. 20, and xxviii. 20,) and he makes his word good, as the experience of his ministers and people in all ages confirms. He has promised also to come again, and take his disciples and faithful followers to himself, that where he is they may be also; which was not only verified in his immediate disciples, but in his saints in all ages, whom, whem they have served their generation according to the will of God, he comes and takes to himself, by death; and "to them that look for him will he appear a second time, without sin, unto salvation." (John xiv. 2, 3; Heb. ix. 28.)

So in the covenant of grace, the covenant was made with him as the Head and Representative of his people, and stands fast with him. All its blessings are faithfully dispensed by him. The promises were made to him,

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who only actually existed when they were made and to whom only they could be given; he was the Amen and faithful Witness of them, and they are Yea and Amen in him, by whose blood its blessings and promises are ratified and confirmed, which is, therefore, called "the blood of the everlasting covenant;" and it is in and through him that believers come to have an interest in the promises. (Psalm lxxxix. 3, 24; Rev. iii. 14; 2 Cor. i. 20; Heb. xiii. 20; Eph. iii. 6.)

3. God is faithful in the performance of the covenant and its promises with respect to his special people. In every covenant God has made with man, he has been faithful. He made a covenant with Adam, as the head and representative of his posterity, promising a continuance of happiness to him and his, provided he remained in his state of innocence; and threatening with death in case of disobedience. Adam was unfaithful, and broke the covenant; *they, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant.* (Hos. vi. 7.) But God was faithful to it, deprived him of his happiness, and pronounced the sentence of death on him and his. God made a covenant with Noah, and all the creatures, promising that he would no more destroy the world by a flood; and he has faithfully kept it, as before observed. He made a covenant with Abraham, that he would make him the father of many nations, &c. which was verified. He made a covenant at Sinai, with all the people of Israel; and, according to his engagements, continued to them their blessings, natural civil, and religious; but they were not steadfast in his covenant, and he dispossessed them. But the grand and principal covenant, is the covenant of grace; which God has made in Christ with

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all his elect, and which is ordered in all things, and sure; and which he will never break, and they cannot; and which will never be removed, but ever be inviolably kept.

Its promises are of various kinds. Some are of a temporal nature; for *godliness* and godly men have the *promise of the life that now is*, as well as of that which is to come. (1. Tim. iv. 8.) He has bid his people *trust in the Lord, and do good*, and has promised that they *shall be fed*, (Psalm xxxvii. 3,) not all of them with dainties and delicious food, but with food convenient for them. He has assured them their *bread shall be given them*, and their *waters shall be sure*, (Isa. xxxiii. 16,) and this is sufficient to support and confirm his faithfulness. Nor is the poverty of some of God's people any objection, since he has nowhere promised them the riches of this world, but has promised them the better riches of grace and glory. God has not promised his people security from outward afflictions, but rather suggested that they may look for them; since his people are described as a poor and afflicted people, which is their common case. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. But God has promised that they shall work for their good; either for their temporal good, as did Jacob's, or for their spiritual, and always for their eternal good. (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

Other promises are of a spiritual kind; the principal of which is the sum of the covenant, *They shall be my people, and I will be their God.* (Jer. xxxii. 38.) This assures them of protection and that he will preserve and keep them by his power, through faith unto salvation. He is their shield, and exceeding great reward; their portion in life, at death, and for ever; their ALL in ALL.

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There are many particular spiritual promises made to the people of God; and which are all made good: as that he will give them new hearts and new spirits, which he does in regeneration; that he will put his laws in them, and write them in their minds; that he will give them spiritual stength to keep his statutes; that he will carry on his good work of grace in them, and perform it until the day of Christ; and that they shall not depart from him, but persevere in faith and holiness to the end. All which promises, and more, are faithfully and truly performed in all his people. (see Jer. xxxi. 33, 34; and xxxii. 38, 39, 40; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.)

4. The faithfulness of God appears in fulfilling his threatenings. God threatened Adam, that in the day he eat of the forbidden fruit, he should surely die; and he immediately became mortal. Death began at once to work in him; his soul was seized directly with a spiritual or moral death, guilt and terror of conscience, or sense of divine wrath, and deprivation of the divine presence, and he became liable to eternal death. The sentence of death passed on him, and all his posterity in him, as soon as he had sinned, according to the divine threatening. (Rom. v. 12.) So of the flood which destroyed the old world; and the captivity of Isreal. And as God has threatened men with the burning of the world, and the works of it, and the wicked in it; and damnation to all unbelieving and impenitent sinners, they may be assured of and expect it. For as it is true and may be depended upon, that *he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;* so it is equally as true, and as surely to be depended on, that *he that believeth not,*

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shall be damned. (Mark xvi. 16.) Nor is the case of the Ninevites any good objection since there was a condition implied, a secret proviso made, "except they repented," which their hope of mercy, and the mercy shown them upon their repentance fully confirm.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SUFFICIENCY AND PERFECTION OF GOD.

From this attribute of God, he has one of his names, *Shaddai*, which signifies, who is sufficient, or all-sufficient.

1. God is a self-sufficient Being. He needs not any thing from without himself to support himself, or to make himself happy. He is the *first* and the last of Beings—before him there was no God, nor will there be after him. From everlasting to everlasting he is God, and, therefore, his existence is not owing to any; nor has he received any assistance or support from any. Being self-existent, he must be self-subsistent. As he existed of himself, and subsisted in and of himself, before any other existed, he must be eternally self-sufficient. Being infinite, he is incomprehensible by others; and comprehends in himself all excellencies, perfections, and happiness; and, therefore, self-sufficient; *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? for of him, and through him, and for him are all things.* (Rom. xi. 35, 36.) He is possessed of *all perfections*, as hasbeen abundantly shown, and is suffi-

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ciently happy in them. He is perfect and entire, wanting nothing, and, therefore, self-sufficient. God in his *divine persons*, God Father, Son and Spirit, have enough within themselves, the utmost, yea, infinite complacency, delight and satisfaction among themselves, and to one another, and had before any creatures were made, and would have had if none had been made. For creation adds nothing to the perfection and happiness of God, nor makes the least alteration in him. It is indeed said, *Thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created*, (Rev. iv. 11,) but pleasure there does not signify delight, satisfaction or happiness; as if they were made to increase it; but the good will and pleasure of God; it is *dia to thelema sou*, and should be rendered, *by thy will they are and were created*. God has made all things for himself; that is, for his glory, his manifestative glory; but this adds nothing to his essential glory and happiness. The heavens, and so the other parts of the creation, declare his glory; but to whom? not to himself, he needs no such declaration; he knows perfectly his own glory, which is always invariably the same; but to angels and men, that they may contemplate it, and receive benefit by it. The invisible perfections of God, his eternal power and Godhead, are seen and understood by the things that are made; but not by God himself, who needs no such glass to view them in; but by men, and the design hereof is, to make some better and happier, and others inexcusable. All creatures stand in need of God to supply them and support them; they consist in him, are upheld by the word of his power, live and move, and have their beings in him; but he stands in need of none, being self-sufficient.

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There is a very remarkable expression in Psalm xvi. 2, 3, *My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight:* which, if spoken by David of himself only, shows that the goodness of men, even of the best of men, is of no advantage to God himself, but to others. The goodness of David in preparing for the building of the temple, and providing for the worship of God in it, in composing hymns and psalms to be sung by men, and in the whole of his life and conversation, was of no avail to the essential happiness of God; but was of use to the saints. But if spoken by him in the person of Christ, as it is clear the words are, then they carry in them a higher sense still: as, that the holiness of Christ, as man, added nothing to the perfection of God and his nature; that the obedience he yielded in it was for the sake of men, who had the advantage of it, and not God. Though the glory of God is greatly displayed in salvation by Christ, the good will is to men; and the peace, pardon, righteousness and eternal life that come thereby come not to God, but to men. God is then a self-sufficient being, who neither needs nor receives any thing from without himself.

2. God is all-sufficient: able to do whatsoever he pleases, to fulfil all his engagements and promises, and to do exceeding abundantly above all that men ask or think. Every good and perfect gift comes from him; which is a full proof of his all-sufficiency.

He is sufficient to support, maintain and preserve the life he has given, to provide sustenance for all, and to govern the universe; nor does he need any wisdom, counsel, advice and assistance from any of his creatures.

God appears to be all-sufficient in the communica-

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tions of his grace. He is the God of all grace, able to cause all grace to abound towards his people, and to supply all their wants out of that rich and glorious plenitude, and all-sufficiency in himself, by Jesus Christ. He has stored the covenant with all the blessings of grace; and caused the fulness of it to dwell in Christ, which is always sufficient for his people in all ages and all nations, in every state and condition of life; and he has a sufficiency of it for all saving purposes, for their acceptance with God, and justification before him for the remission of their sins, and the cleansing of their souls, and to bring them safe to his kingdom and glory. (John i. 14, 16; 2 Cor. xii. 9; Phil. iv. 19.)

3. God is a perfect Being; entirely perfect, and wanting nothing: *Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.* (Matt. v. 48.) His nature is perfect. The more simple and uncompounded any being is the more perfect it is. God is a Spirit, the most pure, spiritual, simple and uncompounded, and, therefore, the most perfect. No perfection of Deity is wanting in him. There is a fulness of the Godhead which dwells in Christ, and and the same, therefore, must be in each divine person. Every attribute is perfect. His wisdom and knowledge are unfathonable, (Rom. xi. 33,) and as for his power, nothing is to hard for him. His holiness is without the least tarnish. Once more, he is a rock, and *his work is perfect:* (Deut. xxxiii 4,) his work of creation is finished, and so is the work of redemption, and ere long, the mystery of providence will be finished, and the work of grace on the heart of every one of his elect. *As for God, his way is perfect.* (Psalm xviii. 30.) Every path of mercy and truth he pursues, he leaves not until finished, and the way he prescribes to his people is perfect.

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CHAPTER XXV.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF GOD.

THAT the nature of God is most blessed, as well as eternal, Epicurus himself asserted; and Velleius, and Epicurean, in Cicero,* is made to say, that "nothing can be thought of more blessed than the life of God, nor more abounding with all good things. He rejoices in his own wisdom and virtue, and assuredly knows that he ever shall be in the highest and eternal pleasure." This God, says he, we rightly call blessed; though he wrongly represents him as neither doing nor designing any thing. Euryphamus, a Pythagorean philosopher, more clearly expresses himself;† "God needs no external cause; for he is φυσει by nature good, and φυσει by nature blessed, and is of himself perfect." From this attribute of blessedness the Scriptures often style God the blessed One, and *the blessed God;* Christ is called, *the Son of the blessed*, (Mark xiv. 61, 62,) the Creator of all things is said to be, *God blessed forever*, (Rom. i. 25; 2 Cor. xi. 31; 1 Tim. i. 11,) and Christ as a divine person, is so called, (Rom. ix. 5,) and nothing is more common with the Jews, in their writings and prayers, than to speak of God as the holy and blessed God. This attribute may be strongly concluded from the one last treated of, for if God is a sufficient, self-sufficient, and all-sufficient Being, he must be happy; as

* De Natura Deorum, l. 1.

† Fragment. ad Calcem, Laert.

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well as from all the perfections of God combined—his simplicity, immutability, infinity, eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscence, justice, holiness, truth and faithfulness, all-sufficiency and perfection; he who is possessed of all these, and in whom no perfection is wanting, must needs be completely blessed. It might be argued from his sovereign, extensive and endless power and dominion; and from that light, glory, and majesty with which he is arrayed, *who is the blessed and only potentate.*

1. The blessedness of God, as it is in himself, lies chiefly in a freedom from all evil, and in possession of all good.

The evil of evils, sin, is an evil and bitter thing in its own nature, extremely pernicious, and the source of all disorders, disasters, distresses and calamities that befal any of the creatures. But God is not affected with sin, and so is clear from all its consequences.

Name whatsoever happiness may be thought to consist in, and it will be found in God in its full perfection. Does it lie in grandeur and dominion? with God is terrible majesty; he is the blessed and only potentate. Does it lie in wealth and riches? *The Gold is mine, and the silver is mine saith the Lord.* (Hag. ii. 8.) The riches of both Indies are his property; the mines and metals of the earth, and "the cattle on a thousand hills." Does it lie in wisdom and knowledge, where Solomon sought for happiness? *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* (Rom. xi. 33.) Does it lie in might, power, and strength, as Sampson's excellency did? God *is mighty in strength: if I speak of strength*, says Job, *lo, he is strong.*

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Does it lie in pleasure; in which also Solomon sought for it, but found it not? *In the presence of God is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.* (Psalm xvi. 11.) Does it lie in fame, in credit and the high esteem of others? How excellent is the name of God in all the earth! his works praise him, his saints bless him, angels celebrate his glory; yea, his glory is above the heavens; his name is great from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.

2. What may serve further to prove and illustrate the blessedness of God is, that he is the cause of all blessedness in his creatures, angels and men. Angels have their beings from him who has given them excellencies of wisdom, knowledge, strength, &c. The temporal and spiritual blessings of men come from him, from whence peace and comfort flow. They are blessed also with the word and ordinances; and with the blessed hope of the blessedness laid up in heaven, which they enter upon at death, and enjoy to all eternity. Now, if such blessedness comes from God, how blessed must he be in himself!

3. God is his own blessedness; it is wholly within himself and of himself; he receives none from without himself, or from his creatures. He himself is the blessedness of his creatures, who are made happy by him; whose blessedness lies in likeness to him.

4. God is pronounced, declared and owned by all his creatures to be blessed, hence the frequent form of blessing him used, *Blessed be the Lord God*, &c. Thus he is blessed by angels, who, as they are called upon to bless him, do ascribe honor, glory, and blessing to him. (Psalm ciii. 20; Rev. v. 11, 12; and vii. 11, 12,) and by

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the saints, who call upon their souls, and all within them, to bless his holy name. (Psalm. ciii. 1, 2, 3, and cxlv. 10.) And this is not by invoking a blessing on him; for there is none greater than he, to invoke and ask of, much less by conferring any upon him; for, as he needs none, a creature can give him nothing but what is his own. Besides, without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the greater; the creature of the Creator, and not the Creator of the creature. But it is by congratulating his greatness and blessedness, and ascribing it to him, and praising him for all blessings which, as they come from him, are proofs of the blessedness that is in him.

This closes the subject of the attributes of God; which all centre and terminate in his blessedness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE UNITY OF GOD.

Following the attributes, we may proceed to [illegible] that this God, who is possessed of all these great [illegible] glorious perfections, is but one. This is a first principle, and should be placed beyond doubt. As he is a fool who says there is no God, he is equally so, who says there are more than one. Tertullian* observes, if God is not one, he is not at all. To this first and chief commandment God requires assent and obedience. On it depends all religion, doctrine and faith. (Mark xii. 28,

* Adv. Marcion. l. 1. c. 3.

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29, 30.) It is the voice both of reason and revelation, and is discernible by the light of nature. Whatever teaches men there is a God, teaches them there is but one. It is a truth agreed on by all, by Jews and Gentiles, by Jewish doctors,* by heathen poets and philosophers,† by Old and New Testament saints, by the holy angels, and even by the devils themselves. The apostle James commends the faith in it: *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble.*

Proof of this doctrine may be taken partly from express passages of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, (Deut. vi. 4; Psalm lxxxvi. 10; Isa. lxiii. 10, and lxiv. 6, 8, and xlv. 5, 6, 14, 18, 21, 22, and xlvi. 9; Mark xii. 29; John xvii. 3; Rom. iii. 30; 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6; Eph. iv. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5,) and partly from the perfections of God, and his relations to his creatures.

The necessary existence of God is a proof of his unity. There can be but one necessarily existent Being. God, the first Cause, who is without a cause, is independent; and there is but one independent Being, and, therefore, but one God.

God is infinite; and as it is clear there cannot be more infinites than one, then but one God.

Omnipotence is a perfection of God. Now there cannot be more than one Almighty. Omnipotence admits of no degrees. It cannot be said, there is one that is almighty, and another that is more almighty, and a third that is most almighty. And the same

* Maimon. Yesode Hattorah, c. 1. s. 4. Joseph Albo in Sepher Ikkarim, l. 2, c. 6, 7.

† Vide Mornæum de Ver. Christ. Relig. c. 3.

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reasoning may be used with the goodness, perfection and sufficiency of God.

The unity of God is not to be understood in the Arian sense, that there is one supreme God, and two subordinate or inferior ones. This is just the notion of the better and wiser class of pagans; and if revelation carries us no further than what the light of nature discovers, we gain nothing by it, with respect to the knowledge of God. The expressions concerning the unity of the divine Being, which are in the Scriptures, are not levelled so much against the notion of more supreme gods, which could never prevail much, and is so absurd and contradictory that there is no danger of its being embraced; but against petty and inferior deities which might be worshipped. Besides, if two subordinate and inferior deities may be admitted, consistent with one God, why not two hundred, or two thousand? Again, those deities are either creators or creatures; if creators, then they are the one supreme God; but if creatures, then they are not gods that made the heavens and the earth; and so come under the imprecation of the prophet: *The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth*, even *they shall perish*, or may they perish *from the earth, and from under these heavens.* (Jer. x. 11.)

Nor are we to understand the unity of God in the Sabellian sense, that God is but one person, and denying thet hree persons in the Godhead. The Sabellians are so called from one Sabellius, who lived in the middle of the third century. This notion was, however, broached before him by Noetus,* whose followers were called

* Vid. Augustin. de Hæres. c. 36.

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Noetians and Patripassians, asserting that the Father became incarnate, suffered and died. And before them Victorinus and Praxeas* were much of the same opinion, against whom Tertullian wrote, and who speaks† of one sort of the Cataphrygians who held that Jesus Christ was both Son and Father. And it may even be traced up to Simon Magus, who asserted that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were only different names of one and the same person, according to his different way of operation;‡ and as before his pretended conversion he he gave out that he was some great one, (Acts viii. 9.) so he did afterwards, and said he was the Father in Samaria, the Son in Judea, and the Holy Ghost in the rest of the nations.§ Our Socinians and modern Unitarians are much of the same sentiment with the Sabellians in this respect; and some who profess evangelical doctrines have embraced it, or are nibbling at it; fancying they have got new light, when they have only imbibed an old stale error, an ancient work of darkness, which has been confuted over and over. If the Father, Son and Spirit were but one person, they could not be three testifiers, as they are said to be. (1 John v. 7.) To testify is a personal action; and if the Father is one that bears record, the Son another, and the Holy Ghost a third, they must be three persons and not one only.

Nor is this doctrine to be understood in a Tritheistic sense, that is, that there are three essences or beings numerically distinct, and called one because they have

* Tertullian. de Præsctipt. Hæret. c. 53. et Adv. Praxeam, c. 1, 2.
† De Præscript. c. 52.
‡ Vid. Danæum in August. de Hæres. c. 1.
§ Irenæus Adv. Hæres. c. 23.

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the same nature; as three men may be said to be one because of the same human nature. This would assert three Gods and not one.

There is but one divine essence, undivided, and common to Father, Son and Spirit, and there are different modes of subsisting in it which are called persons. These possess the whole essence undivided; that is as the whole fulness of the godhead dwells in the Father, so in the Son, who has all that the Father has, (John xv. 16; Col. ii. 9,) and so in the Spirit. This unity is not a unity of testimony only; for it is not said of them as of the three that bear record on earth, that they *agree in one*, but that they *are one*. (1 John v. 7, 8.) But it is a unity of nature; they have one and the same infinite and undivided nature. And this unity is not a unity of parts, which makes one compositum, as the body and soul of man, for God is a simple and uncompounded Spirit; nor a unity of genus and species, under which may be many singulars, but God is one in number and nature. This unity of God is not set aside by the *many names* of God, as El, Elohim, Jehovah, &c. since these are names of the one God, as one and the same man may have different names, nor by the many attributes of God which do not differ from him, nor from one another, but are all one in God, and are himself. Nor by the *persons* in the Godhead being more than one; for they differ not from the divine essence, nor from one another, but by their distinctive modes of subsisting, and are but one God. Nor are those passages of Scripture which assert the unity of God to be appropriated to one person only to the exclusion of the others; but to be considered as including each.

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The famous passage in Deut. vi. 4, which is introduced in a solemn manner, exciting attention, *Hear O Israel, the Lord, our God is one Lord!* and which Christ refers the scribe to as the first and chief command, (Mark xii. 28, 29,) asserts that there is but one Jehovah; but not that this is exclusive of the Son and Spirit; for Christ the Son of God is Jehovah, and is often so called; (see Exod. xvii. 7; Num. xxi. 6, compared with 1 Cor. x. 9; Jer. xxiii. 6; Zech. xii. 10,) and so the Holy Ghost, (Isa. vi. 1, 5, 8, 9, compared with Acts xxviii. 25, 26.) and these, with the Father, are the one Lord or Jehovah; and are manifestly included in Elohenu, a word of the plural number, and may be rendered *our Gods*, or rather our *divine persons* are one Lord.

The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, (John xvii. 3,) which affirm the Father to be the only true God, cannot be understood to the exclusion of himself; *this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent:* since Christ also is called the only Lord God, (Jude v. 4,) and the true God and eternal life. (1 John v. 20.)

The text in 1 Cor. viii. 6, which expresses the faith of Christians, there is *but one God, the Father, of whom are all things*, stands opposed not to any other person in the Godhead, but to the many lords and gods among the heathen. Besides, if Christ could be thought to stand excluded from the *one God the Father*, by the same rule of interpretation, God the Father must stand excluded from the one Lord, said of Christ in the same text; and these observations may be applied to Eph. iv. 5, 6.

It is also said in 1 Tim. ii. 5, that *there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ*

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Jesus. The reason why Christ is spoken of as distinct from the one God, though not different, is for the sake of the mention of him in his office as mediator. But though there are three persons in the Godhead, and none of them stand excluded from Deity, yet there is but one God.

A correct understanding of the doctrine of the unity of the divine Being, is of great importance, especially in acts of worship of which God, the one only good God, is the object. And this doctrine as it fixes and settles the object of worship, so being closely attended to, it guides the mind aright without confusion and division; for let the direction, or address, be to which person it may, as each may be distinctly addressed. Be it to the Father, he is considered in the act of worship, as the one God, with the Son and Spirit; if the address is to the Son, he is considered as the one God, with the Father and the Spirit; or if the address is to the Spirit, he is considered as the one God, with the Father and Son. And this doctrine also serves to fix and settle, without division and distraction of mind, the object of our faith, hope and love, which are not to be exercised on different objects, and to be divided between them; but are to centre in one object, the one only true God, Father, Son and Spirit. And this doctrine carries a strong and powerful argument to promote unity, harmony and concord among the saints; for which it is used in Eph. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

A PLURALITY IN THE GODHEAD; OR, A TRINITY OF PERSONS IN THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE.

HAVING proved the unity of the divine Being, and explained the sense in which it is to be understood; we proceed to prove that there is a plurality in the Godhead; or, that there are more persons than one, and that these are neither more, nor fewer, than three; or, that there is a Trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine essence. Some except to these terms, because not literally and syllabically expressed in Scripture; as Essence, Unity, Trinity, and Person; of which see the Introduction, p. 10.

1. *There is a plurality of persons in the one God.* The Hebrew word פנים which answers to the Greek word προσωπα, is used of the divine persons. *My persons shall go with thee*, Exod xxxiii. 14; and if *thy persons go not with me*, *v.* 15. and *he brought thee out by his persons*, Deut. iv. 37. The word is used three times in Psalm xxvii. 8, 9; and in each clause the Septuagint has the word προσωπον which, as Suidas,* observes, is expressive of the sacred Trinity.

His great and incommunicable name Jehovah, is always in the singular number, because it is expressive of his essence, which is but one; but the first name of God we meet with in Scripture, is plural; *In the begin-*

* In voce αγιος.

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ning God (Elohim) *created the heaven and the earth*, (Gen. i. 1,) and, therefore, must design more than one, at least two, and yet not precisely two, or two only; then it would have been dual; but it is plural; and, as the Jews themselves say, cannot design fewer than three.* Now Moses might have made use of other names of God, in his account of the creation—as his name Jehovah, by which he made himself known to him, and to the people of Israel; or Eloah, the singular of Elohim. So that it was not a want of singular names, nor the barrenness of the Hebrew language, which obliged him to use a plural word. The words may be rendered, distributively, according to the idiom of the Hebrew language: "In the beginning every one, or each of the divine persons, created the heaven and the earth." And then the historian goes on to mention them; who besides the Father, included in this name, are the Spirit of God, that moved upon the face of the waters, and the word of God, *v.* 2, which said *Let there be light and there was light;* and which spoke that and all things, out of nothing. (John i. 1, 2, 3.) And it may be further observed, that this plural word Elohim is, in this passage, in construction with a verb singular, *bara*, rendered *created;* which some have thought is designed to point out a plurality of persons in the unity of the divine essence; but if this is not judged sufficient to build it upon, let it be further observed, that the word Elohim is sometimes in construction with a verb plural, as in Gen. xx. 13, and xxxv. 7; 2 Sam. vii. 23; and likewise it is in construction with adjectives and participles plural. (Deut. iv. 7, and v. 26; Josh. xxiv. 19; 1 Sam.

* Vid. Alting. Dissert. Philolog. 4. s. 6, 7, 8.

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vii. 26, 36; Psal n lviii. 11; Prov. xxx. 3; Jer. x. 10.) Now, as a learned man* well observes, "that however the construction of a noun plural with a verb singular, may render it doubtful to some whether these words express a plurality or no, yet certainly there can be no doubt in those places where a verb or adjective plural are joined with the word Elohim." No such stress is laid on this word, as if it was the clearest and strongest proof of a plurality in the Deity; it is only mentioned, and mentioned first, because it is the most usual name of God, being used of him many hundreds of times in Scripture. And what stress is laid upon it, is not merely because it is plural, but because it appears often in an unusual form of construction. It is used of angels, Psalm viii. 5, they being not only many, but are often messengers of God; the divine Persons in the Godhead represent them, and speak in their name. And it is used of civil magistrates, (Psalm. lxxxii. 6,) and so of Moses, as a God to Pharaoh, (Exod. vii. 1,) as they well may be called, since they are the vicegerents and representatives of the Elohim, the divine Persons, the Trineune God; nor need it be wondered at, that it should be sometimes used of a single Person in the Deity, it being common to them all. The ancient Jews not only concluded a plurality, but even a Trinity, from the word Elohim. With respect to the passage in Numb. xv. 16, they say,† "There is no judgment less than three;" and that three persons sitting in judgment, the divine Majesty is with them, they conclude from Psalm lxxxii. 1, *he judgeth among the gods.* From whence it is manifest

* Allix's Judgment of the Jewish Church, p. 124.

† Gloss. in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 46. 2.

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that the ancient Jews believed that this name not only inferred a plurality of persons, but a plurality which consisted of three at least.

Another plural name of God is Adonim: *If I am* (Adonim) *Lords, where is my fear?* (Mal. i. 6.) Now, though this may be said of one in the second and third persons plural, yet never of one in the first person, as it is here said of God by himself: *I am Lords;* and we are sure there are two: *The Lord said to my Lord*, &c. (Psalm cx. 1.)

A plurality in the Deity may be proved from plural expressions used by God, when speaking of himself, respecting the works of creation, providence and grace. At the creation of man he said, *Let us make man in our image after our likeness.* (Gen. i. 26.) The pronouns *us* and *our*, manifestly expresss a plurality of persons; as *image and likeness*, being in the singular number, denote the unity of the divine essence. Nor is it to be thought that God, in the above passage, speaks *regio more*, after the manner of kings; who, in their edicts and proclamations, used the plural number to express their honor and majesty; and even they may be considered as connotating their ministers and privy council, by whose advice they act. And this courtly way of speaking was not so ancient as the times of Moses. None of the kings of Israel use it; nor even any of those proud and haughty monarchs, Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar. The first appearance of it is in the letters of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, (Ezra iv. 18; and vii. 23,) which might take its rise from the conjunction of Darius and Cyrus, in the Persian Empire, in both of whose names edicts might be made, and letters written; which might give rise to

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such a way of speaking, and be continued by their successors, to express their power and glory. But, as a learned man* observes, "It is a very extravagant fancy, to suppose that Moses alludes to a custom that was not (for what appears) in being at that time, nor a great while after."

A like form is used concerning men, in Gen. iii. 22, *And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us.* Satan in saying, *Ye shall be as gods*, would have it understood by Eve, and so she understood it, that they should be like God himself; this was the bait he laid, and which took, and proved man's ruin; upon which the Lord God said these words either sarcastically, "Behold the man whom Satan promised, and he expected to be as one of us, as one of the persons in the Deity; see how much he looks like one of us! who but just now ran away from us in fear and trembling, covered himself with fig-leaves, and now stands before us clothed with skins of slain beasts!" or else as comparing his former with his present state, for the words may be rendered, *he was as one of us;* made after their image and likeness; but what is he now? he has sinned, and come short of that glorious image; has lost his honor, and is become like the beasts that perish, whose skins he now wears.

God sometimes uses the plural number when speaking of himself, with respect to some particular affairs of providence, *Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language. I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* (Isa. vi. 8.)

And as in the affairs of creation and providence, so

* Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 3. p. 90. edit. fol.

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in those of grace, and with respect to spiritual communion with God, plural expressions are used; as when our Lord says, *If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*, (John xiv. 23,) which personal actions of coming and making abode, expressive of communion and fellowship, are said of more than one. To these instances may be added Cant. i. 11. John iii. 11.

A plurality in the Deity may be proved from those passages of Scripture which speak of the angel of Jehovah, who also is Jehovah. Now if there is a Jehovah that is sent, and, therefore, called an angel, and a Jehovah that sends, there must be more persons than one who are Jehovah.

The first instance of this is in Gen. xvi. 7, where the angel of Jehovah is said to find Hagar, Sarah's maid, in the wilderness, and bid her return to her mistress; which angel appears to be Jehovah, *as She called the name of the Lord*, or Jehovah, *that spake unto her, thou, God seest.*

In Gen. xviii. 2, we read of three men who stood by Abraham in the plains of Mamre, who were angels in a human form, as two of them are expressly said to be. (chap. xix. 1.) Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that they were the three divine Persons; and scruples not to say that at such a time the Trinity dined with Abraham; but the Father, and the holy Spirit, never assumed a human form; nor are they ever called angels. However, one of these was undoubtedly a divine Person, the Son of God in a human form; who is expressly called Jehovah, the Judge of all the earth, to whom

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omnipotence and omniscience are ascribed, and to whom Abraham showed the utmost reverence and respect. Jehovah in human form on earth is from Jehovah in heaven, from whom he is said to rain brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah. (chap. xix. 24.)

The angel who appeared to Abraham at the offering up of his son Isaac, and bid him desist, appears plainly to be the same with him who ordered him to do it, expressly called God. (Gen. xxii. 11, 12, 1, 2.) Add to this, the name Abraham gave the place on this occasion, Jehovah Jireh, because the Lord had appeared and would appear in that place.

The angel which appeared to Moses in the bush, (Exod. iii. 2,) was not a created angel, but a divine person; as is evident from the names by which he is called, Jehovah God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, *I AM that I AM*, and from references in Deut. xxxiii. 16; and Mark xii. 26.

The angel that was promised to go before the children of Israel, through the wilderness to the land of Canaan, was no other than Jehovah, for the obedience of the children of Israel to him was required; and it is also said, the name of the Lord was in him.

Again, we read of the angel of the Lord, before whom Joshua, the high priest, was brought and stood, being accused by Satan, (Zech. iii. 1,) who is not only called Jehovah, but takes upon him to do and order what God alone could do.

To these may be added all those passages which speak of two, as distinct from each other, under the same name of Jehovah; as in the above mentioned text, (Gen. xix, 24,) where Jehovah is said to rain fire and brimstone

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from Jehovah, out of heaven; and Jer. xxxiii 5, 6, where Jehovah promises to raise up a righteous branch to David, whose name should be called *Jehovah our righteousness.*

2. This plurality in the Godhead, is neither more nor fewer than three: *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.* Unity of essence, or nature, is asserted and secured in their being said to be *one.* And they may be called a Trinity, inasmuch as they are *three;* and a Trinity of Persons, since they are not only spoken of as distinct from each other, but a personal action is ascribed to each, for all three are said to bear record. This could not be said of mere names and characters; nor be understood of one person under different names; for, if the one living and true God only bears record, first under the character of a Father, then under the character of a Son, or the Word, and then under the character of the Holy Ghost; testimony, indeed, would be borne three times, but there would be but one witness and not three. Suppose one man standing in the relations of father, son and master, should come into a court of judicature, and be admitted to bear testimony in a case there depending, and should give his testimony first, under the character of a father, then under the character of a son, and next under the character of a master; every one will conclude, that though here was a testimony three times borne, yet there was but one, and not three who bore record. This text is so glaring a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, that the enemies of it have done all they can to weaken its authority, and have tried hard to extripate it from the

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sacred writings. They object, that it is wanting in the Syriac version; that the old Latin interpreter has it not; that it is not to be found in many Greek manuscripts; and is not quoted by the ancient fathers who wrote against the Arians, when it might have been of great service to them. To all which it may be replied; that as to the Syriac version, though an ancient one, it is but a version, and till of late appeared a very defective one; the history of the adulterous woman in the eighth of John, the second epistle of Peter, the second and third epistles of John, the epistle of Jude, and the book of Revelation, were all wanting, till restored from a copy of archbishop Usher's, by De Dieu and Dr. Pocock; who has also, from an Eastern copy, supplied the version with this text, so that now it stands in it. And as to the old Latin interpreter, it is certain that this text is in many Latin manuscripts of an early date, and the vulgate Latin version of the London Polyglot Bible; and the Latin translation which bears the name Jerome has it. And Jerome in an epistle to Eustochium, prefixed to his translation of those canonical epistles, complains of the omission of it, by unfaithful interpreters. As to its being wanting in some Greek manuscripts, it need only be said, it is found in many others. It is in the Complutensian edition, the compilers of which made use of various copies. Out of sixteen ancient copies of Robert Stephens's, nine of them had it; and it is also said to be in an old British copy. As to its not being quoted by some of the ancient fathers, this can be no proof of its not being genuine; since it might be in the original copy, and through the carelessness and unfaithfulness of transcribers, not in that used by

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them; or through copies erased falling into their hands, such as had been corrupted before the times of Arius, even by Artemon, or his disciples, who lived in the second century, who held that Christ was a mere man, and by whom it is said,* this passage was erased. Certain it is, that this epistle was very early corrupted, as the ancient writers testify.† Or it might be in the copies used by the fathers, and yet not quoted by them, having Scriptures enough without it to prove and defend the doctrine. And after all, it appears plainly to be quoted by many of them; by Fulgentius,‡ in the beginning of the sixth century, against the Arians, without any scruple or hesitation; Jerome as before observed, has it in his translation, made in the latter end of the fourth century; it is quoted by Athanasius,§ about the middle of the same; before him by Cyprian,‖ in the middle of the third century; is manifestly referred to by Tertullian¶ in the beginning of it; and by Clemens of Alexandria,** towards the end of the second century. So that it is to be traced up within a hundred years, or less, of the writing of the epistle; which is enough to satisfy any one of the genuineness of this text. And it should be observed, that there never was any dispute about it until Erasmus left it out in the first edition of his translation of the New Testament; and yet he himself, upon the credit of the

* Vid. Wittichii Theolog. Pacific. c. 17. s. 254.
† Vid. Socrat. Eccl. Hist. l. 7. c. 32.
‡ Respons. contr. Arian. Obj. 10. et de Trinitate, c. 4.
§ Contr. Arium, p. 109. de Unit. Deitat. Trin. ad Theoph. l. 1.
‖ De Unitat. Eccles. p. 255. et in Ep. 73. ad Iubajan. p. 184.
¶ Adv. Praxeam, c. 25.
** Pædagog. l. 3. in fine.

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old British copy, before mentioned, put it into another edition of his translation. Even the Socinians themselves have not dared to leave it out in their German Racovian version, A. C. 1630. To which may be added, that the context requires it, the connection to and distinction from the following verse; and in *v.* 9, is a plain reference to the divine witnesses in this. But the proof of the doctrine of the Trinity does not rest on this single passage, but on the whole current and universal consent of Scripture, where it is written as with a sun-beam; and according to which, a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead appears in the works of creation, providence and grace; in all things respecting the office and work of Christ; in God's acts of grace towards and upon his people; and in the worship and duties of religion.

By the works of creation the eternal power and Godhead are made manifest, and in them are plain traces of a Trinity of Persons. That God the Father made the heavens and earth, under which character the apostles addressed him as distinct from Christ his Son, (Acts iv. 24, 27,) none will doubt; and as to the divine Word, or Son, *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that is made.* (John i. 3.) And the Holy Spirit is not only said to move upon the face of the waters which covered the earth, and brought that unformed chaos of earth and water into a beautiful order, but to garnish the heavens, to bespangle the firmament with stars of light. The three are mentioned together in one text, (Psalm xxxiii. 6,) *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth;* where mention is made of Jehovah

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and his Word, the eternal Logos, and of his Spirit, the breath of his mouth, as all concerned in the making of the heavens, and all the host of them.

A Trinity of persons appears in the works of providence. *My father*, says Christ, *worketh hitherto and I work.* (John v. 17.) That is, ever since the works of creation were finished, in which both had a hand, they have been jointly concerned in the works of providence and in the government of the world; and not to the exclusion of the holy Spirit, for, *Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?* Whoever reads attentively Isa. lxiii. 7—14, will easily observe, that mention is made of Jehovah, and of his mercy, loving-kindness and goodness to the children of Israel; and then of the Angel of his presence, as distinct from him, showing love and pity to them, in saving, redeeming, bearing and carrying them all the days of old; and next of his holy Spirit, whom they rebelled against, and whom they vexed, and yet, though thus provoked, he led them on through the wilderness, and caused them to rest in the land of Canaan.

The three divine persons are to be discerned most clearly in all the works of grace. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, (2 Tim. iii. 16,) of God—Father, Son and Spirit—and though it is particularly ascribed to the holy Spirit, *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, (2 Pet. i. 21,) yet not to the exclusion of the Father, or of the Son; and we find all three dictating the writings of which David was the penman: *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue; the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me.* (2 Sam. xxiii. 2 3.) Those

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writings acquaint us with the covenant of grace, made by Jehovah the Father with his Son, who condescended and agreed to be the surety, mediator and messenger of it, and in which the holy Spirit is promised, and whose part in it is to be the applier of its blessings and promises. All three are mentioned together as concerned in this covenant, in Hag. ii. 4, 5, where, for the encouragement of the people of Israel to work in rebuilding the temple, it is said, *For I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts*, according to *the word that I covenanted with you;* or rather, as Junius renders it, *with the Word* by whom I covenanted *with you, when ye came out of Egypt*, (at which time the covenant of grace was more clearly and largely revealed,) *so my spirit remaineth among you:* where may be observed, Jehovah the covenant-maker, and his Word, in, by and with whom he covenanted and the Spirit, standing, as it may be rendered, remaining and abiding, to see that there was a performance and an application of all that was promised. In the sacred writings, the economy of man's salvation is clearly exhibited to us, in which we find the three divine persons, by agreement and consent, take their distinct parts. And it may be observed that the election of men to salvation is usually ascribed to the Father; redemption, or the impetration of salvation, to the Son; and sanctification, or the application of salvation, to the Spirit. And they are all to be met with in one passage, (1 Pet. i. 2,) *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.* But in no place are these acts of grace more distinctly ascribed to each person than in the first chapter of the epistle to the

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Ephesians, where God the Father of Christ, is said to bless and choose his people in him before the foundation of the world, and to predestinate them to the adoption of children by him, in whom they are accepted with him, and where Christ is spoken of as the author of redemption through his blood, which includes forgiveness of sin, and a justifying righteousness; which entitles to the heavenly inheritance; and then the holy Spirit, in distinction from them both, is said to be the earnest of their inheritance, by whom they are sealed until they come to its full possession. The doctrine of the Trinity is often represented as a speculative point, of no great moment, too mysterious and curious to be pried into, and better let alone than meddled with; but it enters into the whole scheme of our salvation, into all the doctrines of the Gospel, and into the experience of the saints.

This truth shines in all the acts of grace towards men. In the act of justification, it is God the Father who justifies, by imputing the righteousness of his Son; and it is the Spirit of God who pronounces the sentence of justification in the conscience of believers; hence they are *justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* (1 Cor. vi. 11.) In the following passage, relating to *adoption*, the three persons are mentioned: *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* (Gal. iv. 6.) Regeneration is an evidence of adoption; and an instance of the great love and abundant mercy of God; and which is sometimes ascribed to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Pet. i. 3,) sometimes to the Son of God, who regenerates and

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quickens whom he will, (John v. 21; 1 John ii. 29,) and sometimes to the Spirit of God. (John iii. 3, 5.) Once more, their unction, or anointing, which they receive from the holy One, is from God the Father, in and through Christ, and by the Spirit—*Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, in God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.* (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.)

It plainly appears that there is a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, from the worship and duties of religion enjoined. The ordinance of baptism, a very solemn part of divine worship, is ordered to be administered *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, (Matt. xxviii. 19,)—not to be understood of three names and characters, but of three persons, who are but one God, as the singular word *name*, prefixed to them, signifies. God alone is to be invoked in prayer, and petitions are directed sometimes to one Person, and sometimes to another; sometimes to the first Person, the God and Father of Christ, (Eph. iii. 14,) sometimes to Christ, the second Person, (Acts vii. 59,) sometimes to the Lord the Spirit, the third Person, (2 Thess. iii. 5,) and sometimes to all three together. (Rev. i. 4, 5.) The benedictory prayers of the apostle plainly mentions the three persons: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.*

Finally, a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, seems necessary from the nature of God himself, and his most complete happiness; for as he is the best, the greatest and most perfect of Beings, his happiness in himself must be the most perfect and complete. Now happiness lies

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not in solitude, but in society; hence the three personal distinctions in Deity, seem necessary to perfect happiness, which lies in that most glorious, inconceivable and inexpressible communion which the three Persons have with one another; and which arises from the incomprehensible in-being and unspeakable nearness they have to each other. (John x. 38, and xiv. 10, 11.)

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PERSONAL RELATIONS; OR, RELATIVE PROPERTIES WHICH DISTINGUISH THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS IN THE DEITY.

As there are Three who are the one God, and these Three are not one and the same Person, but three different Persons, there must be something which distinguishes them from each other. And the distinction between them is not merely *nominal*, as when the Sabellians say, God is one Person, having three names, Father, Son and Spirit, for here is no distinction. When a man has three names, they distinguish him no more than would one; be he called William, Henry or Frederic—William would not distinguish him from Henry, nor Henry from William, nor Frederick from them both, he being one man, having these several names. The distinction is real and personal; the Three in the Godhead are three distinct Persons who are really distinct from each other; so that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the holy Spirit either the Father or the Son·

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but the difficulty is, what that is which gives or makes the distinction between them.

Be it what it may which distinguishes the divine Persons, it must be as early as the existence of God itself; what God is now he ever was. He is eternal and immutable.

Whatever distinguishes them cannot arise from, nor depend upon any works done by them in time, since their distinction is from eternity.

His works are arbitrary, depending upon his pleasure; but not so his Being. the Persons in the Deity, and their manner of subsisting in it. For if there had never been a creature made, nor a soul saved, God would have been the same he is, three Persons in one God. In the economy of man's salvation, to which some ascribe the distinction of Persons as taking its rise, the three divine Persons are manifested, but not made nor made distinct.

What gives the distinction, be it what it may, is by necessity of nature; God exists necessarily, and not by choice and will, as has been before argued; for if his existence is owing to will and choice, it must be either the will and choice of another, or his own; not another's, for then that other would be prior and superior to him, and so be God, and not he; not his own will, for then he must be before he was, which is an absurdity. If the one God then necessarily existed, and the three Persons are the one God, they must necessarily exist; and if they exist as three distinct persons, that which gives them the distinction, must be necessary also, or arises from the necessity of nature.

It is the personal relations, or distinctive relative properties, which belong to each Person, which distinguishes

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them one from another; as paternity in the first Person, filiation in the second, and spiration in the third. Or more plainly, it is begetting, (Psalm ii. 7,) which peculiarly belongs to the first, and is never ascribed to the second and third; which distinguishes him from them both; and give him, with great propriety, the name of Father. It is being begotten, that is the personal relation, or relative property of the second Person; hence called, "the only begotten of the Father," (John i. 14,) which distingnishes him from the first and third, and gives him the name of the Son. And the relative property, or personal relation of the third Person is, that he is breathed by the first and second Persons; hence called, the breath of the Almighty, the breath of the mouth of Jehovah the Father, and the breath of the mouth of Christ the Lord, and which is never said of the other two persons; and so distinguishes him from them, and very pertinently gives him the name of the Spirit, or breath. (Job xxxii. 4; Psalm xxxiii. 6; 2 Thess. ii. 8.) From generation arises the relation, and from relation distinct personality. And as an ancient writer* says, "unbegotten, begotten and proceeding," are not names of essence, (and it may be added, nor of office,) but are modes of subsistence; and so distinguish persons.

Upon the whole, it is easy to observe, that the distinction of Persons in the Deity, depends on the generation of the Son. Take away that, and thus destroy the relation between the first and second Persons, and the distinction drops. And if this distinction were arbitrary, or of choice and will, it might not have existed at all, or have been otherwise than it is. Those who place it

* Justin. Expos. Fid. p. 378.

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to the economy of the Persons in the redemption of men, when urged with this, and that in such case, he that is called the Father, might have been called the Son; and he that is called the Son, might have been called the Father,* have been obliged to acknowledge that so it might have been, if it had so seemed to God, and been agreeable to his will.† Moreover, those who explain away the generation of the Son, and make it no other than a communion of nature, though they profess there are three Persons in the Godhead, are not able to prove it, nor to point out that which distinguishes one from another, nor to otherwise denominate them than as first, second and third Persons, and even the reason for this order they cannot give. For if they have their names and distinctions from the economy of man's salvation, and the part they take therein, these cannot be given them antecedent to the said economy; and yet they must exist, and be considered as existing previous to it. If the first Person has the name of a Father, from his constituting and appointing Christ to be the Mediator and Saviour; and the second Person the name of a Son, from his constitution as such; though the reason of such names from hence does not appear; and the third Person has the name of Spirit, from any office or work under took by him, to breathe into men in creation or regeneration; these names cannot be given them antecedent to such economy, constitution and agreement, taking place; and yet they must be considered antecedent thereunto, in some view or another. But this will more manifestly appear, by considering each divine person particularly.

* Vitring. Epilog. Disput. contr. Roel. p. 3, 4.
† Roel. Dissert. 1. s. 39. p. 40.

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The first Person, whose distinctive relative property is *begetting*, is very pertinently called the Father, which distinguishes him from the second and third Persons. And here let it be observed, that it is not his being a Father with respect to the creatures, that distinguishes him. He is a Father, as the Creator of all, and the Father of Spirits, but this does not give him the name of Father in the Trinity, for the three are equally concerned in creation, providence and grace. But from his being the Father of the Second Person, he is called emphatically God the Father, (Gal. i. 1; Eph. i. 3,) and this name he has from begetting the Son, who is, therefore, called his Son, his begotten, his only begotten Son. (Psalm ii. 7; John i. 14, 18.) And this personal relation, or relative property, is what distinguishes the first Person in the Trinity, never being attributed to any other.

Of the second Person, the distinctive relative property and character is, that he is *begotten*, which is never said of the other two Persons, and so distinguishes him from them, and gives him the name of *Son*. And that he is the Son of God, all the three Persons bear testimony; the Father at the baptism and transfiguration of Christ, (Matt. iii. 17, and xvii. 5; Psalm ii. 7, and lxxxix. 27,) the Word or Son of God himself, (John xix. 7, and v. 17, 18, and x. 30; Mark xiv. 61, 62; John viii. 13—17,) and the Spirit. (Matt. iii. 16, 17.) It is testified and acknowledged by angels, (Luke i. 31, 35; Heb. i. 6,) by devils, (Matt. viii. 29; Mark iii. 11; Luke iv. 41,) by good men, (John i. 6, 7, 33, 34, 49; Matt. xvi. 15, 16; John vi. 67, and xi. 27; Acts viii. 37,) and by bad men. (Matt. xxvii. 54.) The Son-ship of Christ is an article

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of the greatest importance in the Christian religion. It has a very great concern in, and connection with the ordinance of Christian baptism. It is the sum of the first confession of faith made in order to an admission to that ordinance. *I believe*, says the eunich desiring baptism of Philip, *that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* (Acts viii. 37.) Indeed, it is the distinguishing criterion of the Christian religion, and upon which all its important doctrines depend.

The author sees no objection to the use of the phrase, *eternal generation*, as applied to the son-ship of Christ, as the words *beget* and *generate* are nearly synonymous. And as there is nothing in the divine nature but what is eternal, this generation must be *eternal generation.* If no moment or instant can be given or pointed at in eternity or time, in which Christ was not the begotten Son of the Father, then he must be eternally begotten of him, or be his Son by eternal generation. The phrase *eternal generation* is said to be a contradiction in terms; but is no more so than *eternal creation.* If the phrase were used of human generation, it might well be thought a contradiction, but not as used of divine generation, the one being in a nature finite, the other infinite. Perhaps the distinction of a priority of order and a priority of time, may serve to remove the seeming contradiction; the former may be in things eternal, but not the latter. Thus, for instance, God is eternal, and so are his decrees; such as choosing men before the foundation of the world. Now God may be conceived of as previous to his act of choosing in priority of order, though not in priority of time. Considering the Son's generation of the Father from eternity, in a priority of

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order, though there can be none of time, will not appear to be a contradiction in terms.

The generation ascribed to the Divine Being, must be understood to be such as agrees with the nature of an infinite uncreated spirit. That spirits generate we know from the souls or spirits we have about and in us. Our minds, which are spirits, generate thought; thought is the *conception* and *birth* of the mind; and so we speak of it in common and ordinary speech—*I conceive*, or such a man *conceives* so and so. So with the Platonic philosophers, thought is the birth of the mind; they call it the mind begotten by the mind, as it were another like itself.* Now as soon as the mind is, thought is. They commence together and they co-exist, and always will; and this the mind begets within itself, without any mutation or alteration in itself. Now in some respects these answer; the mind to God who is Νους, the eternal mind, and thought, to Christ, the eternal Λογος, word and wisdom of God. Now if our finite created spirits are capable of generating thought without any motion, change, diminution and corruption, without division of their nature or multiplication of their essence; then in an infinitely more perfect manner can God, an infinite uncreated spirit, beget his Son, the eternal Word, wisdom, reason and understanding in his eternal mind, which he never was without, nor was he before it. This illustration may serve in some measure to facilitate our conception of this wonderful mystery. "Mental or metaphysical generation," as a learned divine observes, "is a similitude and adumbration of divine generation; as the mind begets by nature, not by power, so likewise God; as the mind begets a birth co-

* Vid. Zanchium de Natura Dei, c. 7.

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essential and co-eternal, so God; as the mind simple and perfect begets a birth simple and perfect, so God; as the mind begets immutably, (or without mutation,) so God; as the mind begets of itself in itself, so God; as the mind does not beget out of matter without itself, so neither God; as the mind always begets and cannot but beget, so God the Father; as metaphysical generations abides, so the divine." Not but that there is a great dissimilitude between these, as the same writer observes; for the mind begets only a faculty, or an inexistent propriety, but God the Father begets a person existing by himself; the mind begins to beget in time, but God always begets from eternity.

It will be granted that the phrases *begetting* and *begotten*, as attributed to the divine persons in the Godhead, are used in reference to human generation; between which and divine generation there is some resemblance. And as we consider divine generation, it comes nearer to generation, properly so called, than any scheme or hypothesis opposed to it. But care must be taken to remove from our minds every thing carnal, and whatever implies an imperfection; such as division of nature, multiplication of essence, priority and posterity, motion, mutation, alteration, corruption, diminution, cessation from operation, &c.

As to the objection that the doctrine of Christ's Sonship by generation is contrary to the independence of Christ as a divine Person, it may be asked, what dependence has a Son upon a Father, in animal generation? he does not bring him into being. God only is the efficient Cause and Author of his Being. He is at most only an instrument. A parent has no concern in the

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formation of his child; he knows nothing of its shape, features and sex, until its birth; and when it is born, its life, and the continuance of its being, do not depend upon him. It is true, in some sense, the son may be said to depend upon the father, especially in the former part of life; and so does a father oftentimes depend upon his son, as in case of distress, sickness, penury and old age. But be these things as they may, Christ, as all sound divines hold, is God of himself, and independent of any other, though he is the Son of the Father. And as the distinct personality of the Son of God arises from his relation to his Father as such, so the distinct personality of the Father arises from his relation to his Son as such; hence the distinct personality of the one, is no more dependent, than the distinct personality of the other—both arise from their mutual relation to each other; and both arise and commence together, and both are founded in eternal generation.

As to subordination, subjection and inequality, which it is supposed the Son-ship of Christ, by generation implies, it may be answered, that Christ is subordinate and subject to the Father in his office-capacity, in which he, as Mediator, is a Servant and a man; but not as he is the Son of God. Whatever inequality son-ship may imply among men, it implies no such thing in the divine nature, among the divine persons; who in it subsist in perfect equality with one another. All men are *to honor the Son, as they honor the Father;* not as in subordination to him, but as equal with him. There is a passage which is perverted by some to the sense of subordination and subjection of the Son of God to the Father. (1 Cor. xv. 24. 28.) *Then cometh*

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the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father—and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the son also himself be subject unto him; and *put all things under him; that God may be all in all.* It should be observed, that all this is said of something that is future; and which, as yet, is not, and so no proof of what is, or has been. Besides, there is a twofold Son-ship of Christ, divine and human; from the one he is denominated the Son of God, and from the other the Son of man. Now Christ, in the text, is only called the Son, which does not determine which Son-ship is meant. This is to be learnt from the context, where he is spoken of throughout as man who died, and rose again from the dead. The plain and easy sense is, that at the end of the world at Christ's second coming, when all the elect of God shall be gathered in, and Christ shall have completely finished his work, as Mediator, he will deliver up the mediatorial kingdom complete and perfect, that is, the whole body of the elect, the kingdom of priests, to the Father, and say, *Lo, I, and the children whom thou hast given me;* and then the delegated power under which he acted, as the Son of man, will cease, and be no more, and he, as the Son of man, be no longer vested with such authority, but shall become subject to him that put all things under him; and then God, Father, Son and Spirit, will be all in all; and there will be no more distinction of offices among them; only the natural and essential distinctions of the divine Persons will always continue. There are various passages of Scripture in which Christ, as the Son of God, addresses his divine Father, without the least appearance of any subordina-

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tion or subjection to him, but as his equal, (John xvii. 24.)

The Socinians, unwilling to own the eternal Son-ship of Christ, or that he was the Son of God before he was the Son of Mary; and not caring to acknowledge the true reason which is but one, have devised many. Calovius* has collected out of their writings, no less than thirteen causes, or reasons of Christ's Son-ship; some of them foolish and trifling.

The Son-ship of Christ is used to express and enhance the love of God, in the gift of him to the sons of men, (John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9,) which would not be so strongly expressed, and so greatly enhanced, and appear in such a glaring light, if Christ, in such a gift, is considered not as a Son by nature, but as a Servant, and in an office-capacity; God has given what is more than men, or than people, for the life of his chosen, to do which would be love; but he has given his own Son, which is a far greater instance of love. (Isa. xliii. 4.)

If Christ were the Son of God, and called his begotten Son, by virtue of his constitution as Mediator, something analogous could be shown in that constitution, or answering to generation and Son-ship, and laying a sufficient ground and foundation for Christ being called God's own Son, his proper and only begotten Son. What is there in the first Person's appointing and constituting the second to be a Mediator, that gives him the name of a Father? and what is that in the constitution of the second Person

* Socinism. Profligat. art. 2. controv. 6. p. 201.

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in such an office, that gives him the name of the Son, of the only begotten Son?

Its true basis is clearly shown by the following passages of Scripture.

There are some passages which have been made use of to prove the eternal generation of the Son of God, which should not be insisted upon, particularly, (Isa. liii. 8,) *Who shall declare his generation?* which is to be understood, neither of the human, nor of the divine generation of Christ, as it was by the ancient writers; but either of Christ's spiritual seed and offspring; a generation to be accounted of, but not to be counted by men, their number being not to be declared; or rather of the wickedness of that age and generation in which Christ should appear in the flesh.

In Psalm ii. 7, *The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee;* are the words of the Messiah, the Lord's anointed; against whom the kings of the earth set themselves. And these words are quoted in Heb. i. 5, to show the pre-eminence of Christ to the angels. As for the date, *this day*, it may properly be thought expressive of eternity, as one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and as eternity itself. And, indeed, this passage is applicable to any day or time in which Christ is declared and manifested to be the Son of God; as at his incarnation, (Heb. i. 6; 1 John iii. 8,) and at his baptism and transfiguration, (Matt. iii. 17; and xvii. 5,) as it is to the time of his resurrection; when he was declared to be the Son of God. (Acts xiii. 25; Rom. i. 4.) And agreeably to this interpretation he is in the verses following

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treated as heir, and bid to ask what he would for his inheritance.

The text in Prov. viii. 22, while it is a glorious proof of Christ's eternal existence, has also a very clear bearing on this subject. Much darkness has been spread over it by a wrong translation in the Greek version, which renders the words, *the Lord created me*, &c. and which has led into more errors than one. Arius from hence concluded, that Christ, as a divine person, was created by his Father in some instant in eternity.

Some, of late, have put a new and equally absurd sense on these words, as pertaining to the creation of the human soul of Christ in eternity, which, they say, was then made and taken up into union with God.

If this translation of Prov. viii. 22, *He created me*, is to be retained, it is better to interpret it of the constitution of Christ in his office, as Mediator, as the word *create* is used in common language, of making a king, peer, judge, or one in any office. But this is rather meant in the following verse, *I was set up or anointed*, invested with the office of Mediator. Here he first gives an account of his eternal existence, as the Son of God by divine generation; and then of constitution, as Mediator, in his office-capacity. The latter is expressed by his being *set up*, and the former by his being *possessed* or *begotten*, so the same Greek version renders this word in Zech. xiii. 5, and it may be rendered here, *the Lord begat me*. And this sense is confirmed by other phrases following, as of being *brought forth*, as conceived, as the vulgate Latin version has it; or begotten, as the Targum and Syriac. So the Greek version of

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v. 25, is, he *begat* me; and the word is used for generation in Job. xv. 7; Psalm li. 5, and is repeated, *v.* 25. Wisdom further says of himself: *Then was I by him, as one brought up with him*, being begotten by him, and being brought forth, he was brought up with his Father.

To these proofs might be added all those Scriptures which speak of Christ as the begotten, the only begotten of the Father; which have been referred to, which cannot be understood of him as a man, for as such he was not begotten, and so was without father, the antitype of Melchisedec. And his generation must be understood not of his nature, for his nature is the same with the nature of the Father and Spirit, and, therefore, if his was begotten, theirs would be also; but of his person. As in natural, so in divine generation, person begets person, and not essence begets essence; and this begetting is not *out* of, but *in* the divine essence; it being an immanent and eternal act in God. As for the modus or manner of it, we must be content to be ignorant as we are of our own generation, natural and spiritual; and of the incarnation of Christ, and of the union of the human nature to his divine Person. It is enough that Christ is revealed as begotten of the Father; though the manner how he is begotten, cannot be explained. Athanasius expresses it well: "*How* the Father begat the Son, I do not curiously inquire; and *how* he sent forth the Spirit, I do not likewise curiously inquire; but I believe *that* both the Son is begotten, and the holy Spirit proceeds, in a manner unspeakable and impassible." And says Gregory Nazianzen, "Let the generation of God be honored in silence; it is a great thing, (abundantly so,) for thee to learn or know, that he is begotten;

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but *how* he is begotten, is not granted to thee to understand, nor, indeed, to the angels."

This phrase, *the Son of God*, imports what is essential and natural to him; and suggests to us, that he is the true and natural Son of God; not a Son in an improper and figurative sense, or by office, but by nature; that, as such, he is a divine Person, God, the true God. (Heb. i. 8; 1 John v. 20.)

Of the third Person, his distinctive relative property, is to be *breathed*, or to be the *breath* of God; which is never said of the Father and Son; and which, with propriety, gives him the name of *Spirit* or *Breath*, as he is called. (Ezek. xxxvii. 9.) Of this the Scriptures speak very briefly. It should be observed, that though he is most frequently called the holy Spirit, yet it is not his being of an holy nature, and of a spiritual substance, which distinguishes him from the Father and the Son. Nor does he take his name of Spirit, or Breath, from any actions on, in or with respect to creatures; as in breathing into Adam the breath of life, (Gen. ii. 7,) or in breathing the breath of spiritual life, in the regeneration and conversion of men, (Ezek. xxxvii. 9; John 3, 8,) nor from his inspiration of the Scriptures. (2 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Pet. i. 21.)

All these are, however, symbolical of, analogous to, and serve to illustrate his original character, and personal relation and distinction, which denominates him the breath of the Almighty, (Job xxxiii. 4,) and distinguishes him from Jehovah the Father, the breath of whose mouth he is called, (Psalm xxxiii. 6,) and from Christ the Son of God, the breath of whose mouth he is also said to be. (2 Thess. ii. 8.) The name of the

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third Person suggests not a mere power or quality, but designs a person. The procession of the Spirit from Father and Son, though it illustrates his distinction from them, yet rather seems to be understood of his coming forth from them, not with respect to his Person, but his office, in a way of mission by them, to be the Convincer and Comforter of men, and the Applier of all grace unto them. (John xv. 26, and xvi. 7, 8.)

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THE WORD AND WORKS OF GOD.

PART II.

THE ACTS AND WORKS OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

THE INTERNAL ACTS, DECREES AND WORKS OF GOD.

The acts and operations of God, which are worthy of a Being possessed of those perfections which have been described, must also be worthy of our notice. God is *actus purus et simplicissimus.* He is all act, having in him nothing passive. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,* (John v. 17,) said Christ. He had not only worked in providence till then, since the creation, and not only at the creation, but from all eternity. His active and eternal mind had always been at work, and his thoughts were always employed in devising, forming and determining what should be done in time.

The acts and works of God may be distinguished into nternal and external. The *external* transpire in time, visible to, or known by us—as creation, providence, redemption, &c. His *internal* acts and works, (which will be first considered,) are what were done in eternity, and commonly distinguished into personal and essential. *Personal* acts are such as are peculiar to each person, and distinguish the one from the other, which have been noticed in treating of the doctrine of the Trinity.

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Essential acts are such as are common to them all. Among these internal acts of the mind of God are his purposes and decrees, which are called by various names in Scripture—as *the thoughts of his heart*, (Psalm xxxiii. 11; Jer. xxix. 11; 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11,) and the *counsels* of God. (Isa. xxv. 1.) They are sometimes called *decrees;* being the determinations of the mind of God, (Dan. iv. 17; Zeph. ii. 2,) and also the *determinate counsel* of God. (Acts ii. 23.) Sometimes they are expressed by *preordination* and *predestination;* and often by his *will* and *pleasure*, by the *counsel of his will*, and by his *counsel* and *pleasure*, (Rom. ix. 19; Eph. i. 11; Isa. xlvi. 10,) as they contain and express his mind and will.

1. The decrees and purposes of God are not merely ideas of things future, but settled determinations concerning them; which may be evidenced from the nature and perfections of God. His eternal mind must always have been employed. As the mind of man is never without its thoughts, and the understanding has its acts, and the will its volitions; so God was never without the thoughts of his heart, the acts of his understanding and the volitions of his will. The *Sovereignty* of God over all, and his *independency*, clearly show that whatever is done in time, is according to his decrees in eternity. The *immutability* of God requires eternal decrees. His *knowledge* supposes and clearly establishes them. The *wisdom* of God makes them necessary. He is the all-wise and only wise God, and in wisdom makes all his works; which cannot be supposed without previous thoughts and determinations concerning them.

2. The extent of the decrees and purposes of God deserve notice and consideration, embracing as they do

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all things that come to pass in the world, from its beginning to the end. All were created by and according to the will and pleasure of God. (Rev. iv. 11.) The peopling of the world; the distinction of nations; the rise, progress and ruin of states, kingdoms and empires, all transpired according to the decrees of God. The church of God, in its different states, under the different dispensations, its persecutions and sufferings, and its prosperity and increase are all fixed by the decree of God. Every thing respecting all the individuals of the world, that have been, are or shall be, all correspond with the decrees of God. In a word, every thing is pre-ordained, whether good or bad. The good by his effective decrees, that is, such by which he determines what he will do himself, or shall be done by others; and evil things, by his permissive decrees, by which he suffers things to be done, and which he overrules for his own glory. So with things of the least importance, as well as the greatest; the hairs of mens' heads are numbered; two sparrows, not worth more than a farthing, fall not to the ground without the knowledge, will and purpose of God. (Matt. x. 29, 30.)

3. The properties of the purposes and decrees of God may next be considered. As they are internal acts, they are *immanent* ones; they are in God, and remain and abide in him; and whilst they are so, they put nothing into actual being, until they bring forth, or are brought forth into execution. Then they pass upon their respective objects, terminate on them and issue in actual operation. They are eternal; as God himself is eternal, so are they; for, as some divines express it, God's decrees are himself decreeing, and, therefore, if

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he is from everlasting to everlasting, they are so likewise. They are the free acts of his will without any force or compulsion, and influenced by no motive from without himself. They are most wise; as God is a wise Being, and does all his works in wisdom, so his decrees are laid in the deepest wisdom. They are like himself, the same to-day, yesterday and for ever; without any variableness, or shadow of turning. Always effectual; they cannot be frustrated or disannulled, *For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?* (Isa. xiv. 27.) The end of the decrees of God is his own glory. There may be, and are, inferior ends—as the good of his creatures, &c.—but his glory is the supreme end, and all others are subordinate.

CHAPTER II.

THE SPECIAL DECREES OF GOD.

THE special decrees of God respecting rational creatures, commonly go under the name of *predestination;* though this is sometimes taken in a large sense, to express every thing that God has predetermined, which some call eternal providence, of which temporary providence is the execution. Predestination is usually considered as consisting of two parts, and including the two branches of election and reprobation. Some of the angels are called *elect*, (2 Tim. v. 21,) and others are said to be *reserved in chains*, in the chains of God's pur-

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poses and providence, *unto* the *judgment* of the great day. (2 Pet. ii. 4.) Some of mankind are vessels of mercy, afore-prepared for glory; others vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction; some are the *election*, or the elect persons, who obtain righteousness, life and salvation, and others are the *rest* that are left in and given up to blindness. (Rom. ix. 22, 23, and xi. 7.) Sometimes predestination only respects that branch called election, and the predestinated signify only the elect; for who else are called, justified and glorified, and enjoy adoption and the heavenly inheritance? surely not the non-elect. (Rom. viii. 29, 30; Eph. i. 5, 11.)

I. *The Election of Angels.*

Of this the Scriptures speak but sparingly. That there are some angels that are elect is certain, from the proof already given; and there is a similarity between their election and the election of men; though in some particulars a difference appears.

The election of angels, as well as of men, is of God; he has chosen and distinguished them from others, and, therefore, they are called the *angels of God*, (Luke xii. 8, 9,) not merely because they are his creatures, for such are the evil angels; but because they are his chosen, his favorites, and appointed to be happy with him to all eternity. Their election, as that of men, lies in a distinction and separation from the rest of their species. They are not only distinguished from them by their characters, some being only angels, and others the angels that sinned; but by their state and condition, the one being preserved from apostasy, and continued in their first estate; the other left to fall into sin, and

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from their former state, and reserved unto judgment. In their election they were considered as on an equal footing with others not elected, as men are considered, when chosen, as in the pure mass, having done neither good nor evil. This must be beyond question, with respect to them, since the elect angels never fell, never were in any corrupt state, and could not be so considered. Besides, their preservation from apostacy, and their confirmation by grace, in the state in which they were created, are in consequence of their election; and, therefore, must be previous to the fall of the rest; wherefore the choice of the one, and the leaving of the other, must be entirely owing to the sovereign will of God. Though their election is not said to be made in Christ, as the election of men; nor could it be made in him, considered as Mediator; since they having never sinned against God, and offended him, needed him not to mediate between God and them, yet they might be chosen in him, as they seem to be, as a Head of conservation; as a Head both of eminence to rule over them, protect and preserve them in their state; and of influence, to communicate grace and strength to them; to confirm them in their state in which they are; for Christ is *the head of all principality and power.* (Col. ii. 10.) Though the angels are not chosen to salvation as men are, as that signifies a deliverence from sin and misery; seeing they never sinned, and so were never in a miserable condition, and needed no Saviour and Redeemer; yet they are chosen to happiness, to communion with God now, whose face they ever behold; and to a confirmed state of holiness and impeccability, and to the enjoyment of God, and the society of elect men to all eternity.

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II. *The Election of Men.*

It may be proper in the first place to take some notice of the election of Christ, as man and mediator, who is God's first and chief elect; and is, by way of eminence, called his elect: *Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth*, (Isa. xlii. 1,) and oftentimes the chosen of God. (Psalm lxxxix. 3; Luke xxiii. 35; 1 Pet. ii. 4.) Which character not only denotes excellence and esteem by God which Christ has; who, though disallowed and rejected by men, is chosen of God, and precious; but either relates to the choice of the human nature of Christ to the grace of union with him as the Son of God, or to the choice of him to his office as Mediator, in which he was set up, and with which he was invested, and had the glory of before the world began. He was first chosen and set up as a Head; and then his people were chosen as members. As they are appointed to salvation by him, he is appointed to be the Saviour of them; and as their salvation is through his sufferings and death, he was foreordained, before the foundation of the world, to be the slain Lamb. But our principal topic is the election of men in Christ unto eternal life.

Some are of the opinion that this doctrine of election, admitting it to be true, should not be published, preached, taught or treated of, because it is a secret, and secret things belong to God; because it tends to fill mens' minds with doubts about their salvation, and to bring them unto distress, and even into despair; and because some may make a bad use of it, to indulge themselves in a sinful course of life, and argue that if they are elected they shall be saved, let them live as they may,

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and so it opens a door to all licentiousness. But these reasons are frivolous and groundless. The doctrine of election is no secret but is clearly and fully revealed, written as with a sunbeam in the sacred Scriptures. It is true it cannot be said of particular persons, that such an one is elected, and such an one is reprobated; especially when both appear to be in a state of unregeneracy; yet, when men, in a judgment of charity, may be hoped to be called by grace, they may be concluded to be the elect of God, though it cannot be said with precision. And on the other hand, there may be black marks of reprobation on some, or at least things have such a very dark aspect on them, that we are apt to say, when we see such a person in all excess of wickedness with boldness and impudence, what a reprobate creature is this; though indeed no man, be he ever so vile, is out of the reach of powerful and efficacious grace. And whereas there may be only the appearance of grace, and not the truth of it, in those who profess to have it; it cannot be said with certainty that such a one is an elect person. However, a truly gracious man may know for himself his *election of God*, as the apostle affirms; because of the *Gospel* being *come* to him, *not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost*, (1 Thess. i. 4, 5,) who by means of it has begun, and will carry on and perform the work of grace in him. Wherefore such persons will not be filled with doubts and fears about their salvation, nor be led into distress and dispair through the doctrine of election. Nor need any be distressed about it who are inquiring the way of salvation, or have any knowledge of it; for the first question is not, am I elected; but am I born again? am I a new creature? am I called by the grace of

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God, and truly converted? If a man can arrive at satisfaction in this he can have no doubt about his election. The doctrine of regeneration, which asserts that a man must be born again, or he cannot see and enter into the kingdom of heaven, may as well be objected to, as that of election; since it is as difficult to come to satisfaction about regeneration as about election; and when once the one is a clear case, the other must be likewise; and when it is, what thankfulness and joy does it produce! And if the apostle thought himself bound to give thanks to God for his choice of the Thessalonians to salvation; how much more reason had he to bless the God and Father of Christ for his own election, as he does. (2 Thess. ii. 13; Eph. i. 3, 4.) With what exultation and triumph may a believer in Christ take up those words of the apostle, and use them with application to himself, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* (Rom. viii. 33,) yea our Lord Jesus Christ exhorts his disciples, rather to *rejoice* that their *names* were *written in heaven*, than that the spirits were subject to them, or that they were possessed of extraordinary gifts. As for the charge of licentiousness, what is there but what a wicked man may abuse to encourage himself in sin? as even the patience and long-suffering of God; ungodly men may turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. Strange! that this doctrine should of itself lead to licentiousness, when its subject is the source of all holiness. Men are chosen to be holy; they are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, which is secured by this decree as certainly as salvation itself. Wherefore those reasons are insufficient to deter us from receiving, professing and publishing this doctrine: and the rather,

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since it is the doctrine of Christ. What means our Lord when he speaks of the elect of God, for whose sake the days of tribulation should be shortened; and declares it impossible that the elect should be deceived; and that God will avenge his own elect? (Matt. xxiv. 22. 24; Luke xviii. 7.) And as it is so fully declared in the Bible, and is a part of Scripture given by the inspiration of God, profitable for doctrine, written for our learning, to teach us humility, to depress the pride of man, and to magnify the sovereign grace of God in his salvation; we need not be ashamed of nor conceal it. The apostle exhorts to make our *election* as well as calling *sure*, (2 Pet. i. 10,) but how should we do this, if not taught its doctrine, truth, nature, use and the way and means whereby it is to be made sure?

1. Various phrases and terms are used in Scripture to denote this doctrine. In Acts xiii. 48—*As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed;* which means the predestination, choice and appointment to everlasting life and salvation by Jesus Christ; and from whence it appears that this is of particular persons, and not all, that it is not to temporary privileges and enjoyments, but to grace and glory; that faith is not the cause, but the certain fruit and effect of it; and that both eternal life through Christ, and belief in him, are infallibly secured by this act of grace. Some, in order to evade the force and evidence of these words in favor of election, would have them rendered, *as many as were disposed for eternal life, believed;* but this does not agree with the use of the word throughout the book of the Acts by the divine historian, where it always signifies determination and appointment. And so by our

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translators it is rendered *determined* in Acts xv. 2, *appointed* in chap. xxii. 10, and xxviii. 23. In the *vulgate* Latin version, and by Arias Montanus it is here rendered *preordained*. And besides, there are no good dispositions for eternal life in men before faith; whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.

The *names* of persons are said to be *written in heaven*, and in the *book of life*, called *the Lamb's book of life;* which shows that it is an act of God in heaven, relates to particular persons, whose names are in a special manner known of God, and as distinct from others; and is sure and certain, and will abide. But the more common phrases used are *chosen* and *elected;* and the objects are called God's *elect*, and the *election*. (Eph. i 4; 2 Thess. ii. 13; Rom. viii. 33, and xi. 7.) *I speak not of you all*, says Christ; *I know whom I have chosen*, (John xiii. 18.) *Many are called, but few chosen*, (Matt. xx. 16,) hence those who are chosen, are called *a remnant, according to the election of grace;* and those not chosen, *the rest* that are left. (Rom. xi. 5, 7.)

Wherefore this election is not an election of a nation to some external privilages, as the Israelites who were chosen of God to be a special people. For it is said they were not all Israel, or God's elect, redeemed and called people in the most special sense. Our own country is selected and distinguished from many others, by various blessings of goodness, and particularly by having the means of grace; yet all the individuals cannot be thought objects of election to special grace, and eternal glory.

Nor is it an election to offices; as the sons of the house of Aaron were chosen to minister, in the office of priests; as Saul was chosen to be king over Israel; and

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the twelve were chosen to be the apostles of Christ. For there were many bad men in the priestly office; and Saul behaved so ill, as to lose the kingdom; and of the twelve apostles, one was a devil; so that though those were chosen to even the highest offices in the Church and state, yet not to eternal life.

Nor is it an election of whole bodies and communities of men, under the character of churches, to the enjoyment of the means of grace. Eph. i. 4, furnishes no instance of this. It is not certain the apostle wrote that epistle to the Ephesians, as to a church, but to some there described, as saints and faithful in Christ Jesus; and it is quite certain, that those who he says were *chosen in Christ*, were not only the Ephesians, but others also. The character of *elect* is not given to the Colossians, (chap. iii. 12,) as a church, for they are not addressed as a church, and if they were this might be said of them in a judgment of charity, since they all professed faith in Christ. And when the apostle Peter speaks of some to whom he writes as elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, and a chosen generation, (1 Pet. i, 2, and ii. 9,) it is not as a church; for he writes to strangers, scattered abroad in several countries; nor as chosen barely to the means of grace and outward privileges, but to grace and glory.

This election is the choice of certain persons by God from all eternity, to grace and glory, is an act by which men are chosen of God's good will and pleasure, from before the world was, to holiness and happiness, to salvation by Christ, to partake of his glory, and to enjoy eternal life, as the free gift of God through him. (Eph. i. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 13; Acts xiii. 48.) And this is the

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first and foundation-blessing; according to which all spiritual blessings are dispensed; and is the first link in the golden chain of man's salvation. (Eph. i. 3, 4; Rom. viii. 30.)

2. Election is made by God in Christ. It is made by God, as the efficient cause. God is a sovereign Being who does and may do whatever he pleases in heaven and in earth, among angels and men; and has a right to do what he will with his own. Shall he be denied that which every man claims? Do not kings choose their own ministers; masters their servants; and every man his own favorites, friends and companions? and may not God choose whom he pleases to communion with him, both here and hereafter; or to grace and glory? He does this, and, therefore, it is called *election of God*, of which God is the efficient cause, (1 Thess. i. 4,) and the persons chosen are called *God's elect.* (Rom, viii. 33; Luke xviii. 7.) This act is usually ascribed to God the Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. As he is said to bless men with spiritual blessings, so he is said to choose them in Christ, before the foundation of the world, (Eph. i. 3, 4,) and the persons chosen are said to be *elect, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;* (1 Pet. i. 2,) where the Person who chooses is not only described as the Father, but is distinguished from the Spirit, through whose sanctification, and from Jesus Christ, to whose obedience, and the sprinkling of whose blood they are chosen. Sometimes it is ascribed to Christ himself, who says, *I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen.* (John xiii. 18.) This cannot be

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understood of Christ's choosing his disciples to the office of apostleship, for all the twelve were chosen to that, but of his choosing them to eternal life; and this is what he could not say of them all, for one of them was the son of perdition. And hence the elect are called Christ's elect; not only because chosen in him, and given to him, but because chosen by him; *He* (the Son of man) *shall send his angels—and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds.* (Matt. xxiv. 30, 31.) Nor is the blessed Spirit to be excluded; for since he has a place in the decree of the means, in order that the end may be attained, in the blessings, gifts and operations of grace, he must have a part with the Father and the Son in the act itself, as the efficient cause of it. This act is made in Christ, *according as he hath chosen us in him.* (Eph. i. 4.) Election does not find men in Christ but puts them there. *If any man be in Christ*, even in the secret way, by electing grace, *he is a new creature*, sooner or later; which is an evidence of it; for when he becomes a new creature, this shows him to have been in Christ before, from whence this grace proceeds. *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago*, says the apostle, (2 Cor. xii. 2,) meaning himself, who was about that time, and not before, called, converted and became a believer in Christ, and so was openly in Christ. Men are not elected because Christ has died for, redeemed and saved them; but Christ has done all this for them because they are elect; *I lay down my life for the sheep*, says Christ. (John x. 15.)

3. The objects of election are persons; not characters, but men, nakedly and abstractly considered. But the number of the chosen ones is not confined to any

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particular nation; for as God is the God both of the Jews and of the Gentiles, so of those whom he has in election prepared for glory, in consequence of which he calls them by his grace, are not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; and who are eventually, for the most part, the poor of this world, (James ii. 5,) men mean and despicable in the eyes of it; and these are but few in comparison, not only with the men of the world, but even with those who are externally called: *Many are called but few are chosen.* (Matt. xx. 16.) They are but a little flock to whom it is the pleasure of their heavenly Father to give the kingdom, though considered absolutely, they are a great multitude which no man can number. (Luke xii. 32; Rev. vii. 9.)

There is a question whether men were considered, in the mind of God, in the decree of election, as fallen or unfallen; as in the corrupt mass, through the fall; or in the pure mass of creatureship, previous to it; and as to be created. There are some called Supralapsarians, who believe the latter, and of these some hold that man was considered as *to be created*, and others as *created* but not fallen. The former hold that of the vast number of individuals that came up in the divine mind, and that he intended to bring into being, he designed to glorify himself by them in some way or other. The decree of election they distinguish into the decree of the end, and the decree of the means. The decree of the end, respecting some, is either subordinate to their eternal happiness or ultimate; which is more properly the end, the glory of God; and if both are put together, it is a state of everlasting communion with God, for the glorifying of the riches of his sovereign grace and good-

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ness. (Eph. i. 5, 6.) The decree of the means, includes the decree to create men, to permit them to fall, to recover them out of it through redemption by Christ, to sanctify them by the grace of the Spirit, and completely save them; and which are not to be reckoned as materially many decrees, but as making one formal decree; or they are not to be considerd as subordinate, but co-ordinate means, and as making up one entire complete medium. For it is not to be supposed that God decreed to create man, that he might permit him to fall; nor that he decreed to permit him to fall, that he might redeem, sanctify and save him; but he decreed all this that he might glorify his grace, mercy and justice. And in this way of considering the decrees of God, they think they sufficiently obviate and remove the slanderous calumny cast upon them, with respect to the other branch of predestination, which leaves men in the same state when others are chosen, and that for the glory of God. This calumny is that they hold that God made man to damn him; whereas, according to their real sentiments, God decreed to make man, and made man, neither to damn him, nor save him, but for his own glory; which end is answered in them, some way or another. Again, they argue that the end is first in view, before the means and the decree of the end is, in order of nature, before the decree of the means; and what is first in intention, is last in execution; now as the glory of God is the last in execution, it must be first in intention; wherefore men must be considered, in the decree of the end, as not yet created and fallen; since the creation and permission of sin, belong to the decree of the means, which, in order of nature, is after the decree of the end.

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And they add to this, that if God first decreed to create man, and suffer him to fall, and then, out of the fall choose some to grace and glory; he must decree to create man without an end, which is to make God do what no wise man would. Beza remarks, that if the apostle had considered mankind as corrupted, he would not have said that some vessels were made to honor, and some to dishonor; but rather, that seeing all the vessels would be fit for dishonor, some were left in that dishonor, and others translated from dishonor to honor. They further observe, that elect angels could not be considered in the corrupt mass, when chosen; since they never fell, and, therefore, it is most reasonable, that as they, so those angels that were not chosen, were considered in the same pure mass of creatureship; and so in like manner men; to which they add the human nature of Christ, which is the object of election to a greater dignity than that of angels and men, and could not be considered in the corrupt mass, since it fell not in Adam, nor ever came into any corrupt state; and yet it was *chosen out of the people*, (Psalm lxxxix. 19,) and consequently the people out of whom it was chosen, must be considered as yet not fallen and corrupt. These are hints of some of the arguments used on this side of the question.

On the other hand, those who are called Sublapsarians, holding that men were considered as created and fallen, in the decree of election, urge, (John xv. 19,) *I have chosen you out of the world.* Now the world is full of wickedness, it lies in it, is under the power of the wicked one; and, therefore, they that are chosen out of them must be so too. But this text does not relate

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to eternal election, but to effectual vocation; by which men are called and separated from the world. They further observe, that the elect are called *vessels of mercy;* which supposes them to have been miserable, and so sinful, and to stand in need of mercy; and must be so considered in their election. But though the elect are brought to happiness through various means, which are owing to the mercy of God, yet it follows not that they were considered as in need of mercy in their choice to happiness. It is also said that men are chosen in Christ as Mediator, Redeemer and Saviour; which implies, that an offence is given and taken, and reconciliation is to be made, which supposes men to be sinful; but then men are chosen in Christ not as the meritorious cause of election, but as the means or medium of bringing them to the happiness they are chosen to. It is, moreover, noticed that the transitus in Scripture is not from election to creation, but to vocation, justification, adoption, sanctification and salvation. But, for instance, can vocation be supposed without creation? It is thought that this way of considering men as fallen, in the decree of election, is more mild and gentle than the other, and best accounts for the justice of God; that since all are in the corrupt mass, it cannot be unjust in him to choose some out of it to undeserved happiness; and to leave others in it, who perish justly for their sins; or since all are deserving of the wrath of God for sin, where is the injustice of appointing some not unto the wrath they deserve, but unto salvation by Christ, when others are fore-ordained to just condemnation and wrath for their sins? But on the other hand, what reason also can there be to charge God with injustice, that inasmuch as

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all are considered in the pure mass of creatureship, that some should be chosen in it, and others be passed by in it; and both for his own glory? These are some of the principal arguments used on both sides; the difference is not so great as may be thought at first sight; for both agree in the main and material things in th doctrine of election. Calvin was for the corrupt mass; Beza, who was co-pastor with him in the church at Geneva, and his successor, was for the pure mass. The Contra-remonstrants in Holland, when Arminianism first appeared among them, were not agreed in this point; some took one side of the question, and some the other; but they both united against the common adversary, the Arminians. Dr. Twiss, who was a great Supralapsarian, and closely studied the point, confesses that it is only *apex logicus*, a point in logic, and that the difference only lay in the ordering and ranging the decrees of God. The author thinks both may be accepted—that in the decree of the end, the ultimate end, the glory of God, men might be considered in the divine mind as creable, not yet created and fallen; and that in the decree of the means, which, among other things, embraces the mediation of Christ, redemption and sanctification, they might be considered as created, fallen and sinful, which these things imply. Nor does this suppose separate acts and decrees in God, or any priority and posteriority in them. But our finite minds are obliged to consider them one after another, not being able to comprehend them together and at once.

4. The date of election is next to be considered. And certain it is, that it was before men were born: *The children not being yet born—that the purpose of God, accor-*

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ding to election might stand. (Rom. ix. 11.) And this also is before the new birth, or before calling. For calling is the fruit and effect of election. The apostle says of the Thessalonians, *God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation.* (2 Thess. ii. 13.) This phrase is expressive of eternity: *I was set up from everlasting; from the beginniug; or ever the earth was.* (Prov. viii. 23.) And it is in so many words affirmed by the apostle, that this choice of men to holiness and happiness, was made *in Christ before the foundation of the world,* (Eph. i. 4,) and elsewhere it is said that the book of life of the Lamb, in which the names of God's elect are set down, and the names of others left out, was written as early. (Rev. xiii. 8, and xvii. 8.) And that this act of election is an eternal act, or from eternity, may be concluded, from the foreknowledge of God, which is eternal; from the love of God to his people, which is an everlasting love; from the covenant of grace, which is an everlasting covenant, in which the goings of Christ as Mediator were of old, and promises were made before the world began; from the early preparation of grace and glory; and from the nature of the decrees of God in general. And, indeed, the whole scheme of man's salvation by Christ, the *fellowship of the mystery* hid in him, in which there is such an amazing display of the wisdom of God, is *according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Eph. iii. 9, 10, 11.)

As to the impulsive, or moving cause of this act in God, or the motives and inducements with God, no other reason can be given for his will or decree to bestow grace and glory on men, for his own glory, and of his actual donation of them, but what our Lord gives: *Even so,*

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Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. (Matt xi. 25, 26.)

6. Of the means fixed in the decree of election, for its execution to bring about the end intended, the prinpal are the mediation of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit. The mediation of Christ—Christ as God, is the efficient cause of election—in his office-capacity, as an Head, the elect are chosen in him, as members of him; and though his mediation, sufferings and death, are not the meritorious cause of election, yet Christ in them is the medium of its execution, that is, of bringing the chosen ones, through grace, to glory, whereby God is glorified, and so the end is answered. Moreover, men are chosen to salvation, *through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*, as means to that end. (2 Thess. ii. 13.) The *sanctification of the Spirit* is the work of grace on the heart, begun in regeneration, and carried on by the Spirit, until perfected. This is necessary to salvation, for without holiness, even perfect holiness, no man shall see the Lord; and, therefore, it is fixed as a means and made sure and certain by the decree of election. And this shows that the doctrine of election can be no licentious doctrine, but a doctrine according to godliness; since it makes such sure provision for holiness, as well as for happiness. *Belief of the truth* may signify, not a bare belief of the Gospel, but faith in Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, and believing in him with the heart, unto righteousness, with which salvation is connected, and to which it is necessary, and is a means.

7. The ends settled in the decree of election are both subordinate and ultimate; the subordinate having the nature of means with respect to the ultimate. God is

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said to *predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son*, to be made like unto him. Man was made after the image of God, of which by sinning he came short. In regeneration the image of Christ is enstamped, the lines of his grace are drawn upon, and he himself is formed in the hearts of his people; and into this image they are more and more changed through transforming views of his glory; and which will be complete in the future state; and to this they are predestinated, and that in order to another end, that Christ *might be the first-born among many brethren*. The brethren are the predestinated ones, who are brethren to each other; and these are many, the many sons whom Christ brings to glory. He is the first-born among them, and that he may appear to be so, he is set up as their pattern to whose image they are predestinated to be conformed, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. (Rom. viii. 29.) They are said to be *predestinated to the adoption of children*, (Eph. i. 5,) which may be understood either of the grace of adoption, the blessing itself, or the inheritance adopted to, which they obtain in Christ, being predestinated to it according to a divine purpose. (Eph. i. 11.) They are likewise chosen to be *holy and without blame*, (Eph. i. 4,) even to unblameable holiness, which is begun in this life and perfected in the other; when they will appear before the throne in the sight of God without fault, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. They are said to be chosen unto faith: *God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith.* (James ii. 5.) He chose them *to be* rich in faith, (as the words may be supplied,) as well as to be heirs of the kingdom; and this end is always answered. Such as are chosen

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do believe: *as many as are ordained to eternal life believed.* (Acts xiii. 48.) The elect are chosen to obedience and good works. (1 Pet. i. 2.) These are subordinate ends which respect grace, and are in order to a further end, glory and happiness which is sometimes expressed by salvation: *God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,* (1 Thess. v. 9,) and again, *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.* (2 Thess ii. 13.) This end is also expressed by eternal life: *As many as were ordained to eternal life.* (Acts xiii. 48.)

Now all these ends, both respecting grace and glory, are subordinate ones to the grand and ultimate end of all the glory of God. For as God swears by himself, because he could swear by no greater, so because a greater end could not be proposed than his own glory, he has set up that as the supreme end of all his decrees. And with respect to the decree of election, its end is the glory of his grace joined with justice. The election of men to unblameable holiness, and their predestination to the adoption of children, are said to be *to the praise of the glory of his grace.* (Eph. i. 4—6.) His great end in election is to *make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of his mercy;* and not the glory of his grace and mercy only, but of his justice also; for which provision is made in the decree of the means, by *setting forth,* or pre-ordaining Christ *to be the propitiation,* or make atonement *for sin; to declare his righteousness,* the justice of God, *that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus.* (Rom. iii. 25, 26.) And so the glory of God, of his justice and holiness, as well as of his grace and mercy, appear to be great in salvation. Here

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mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other; and God is glorified in all his perfections, which is the great end in view.

8. Many blessing and benefits flow from election—indeed all spiritual blessings. It is, as it were, the rule, measure and standard according to which they are communicated. The several chains in man's salvation are connected with it, and hang and depend upon it, (Eph. i. 3, 4; Rom. viii. 30,)—vocation, faith, holiness, communion with God, justification, adoption and glorification.

9. The several properties of election may be gathered from the preceding. It is eternal; from before the foundation of the world. It is free and sovereign; God was not obliged to choose any; and as it is, he chooses whom he will, and for no other reason excepting his own glory, but because he will. It is absolute and unconditional; clear of all motives in man, or conditions to be performed by him; for it *stands not of works, but of him that calleth*, the will of him that calls. It is complete and perfect; has its complete being in the will of God at once. It is immutable and irrevocable, and hence is safe and secure. It is special and particular; that is, those who are chosen are chosen to be a special people above all others, and are particular persons, whose names are written in the book of life.

Election may be known by its objects; partly by the blessings connected with it bestowed upon them, and by the Spirit of God testifying to them their adoption. It is made known to others by holy lives and conversations; which is meant by making calling and election sure, even by good works, as some copies read. (2 Pet.

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i. 10.) Indeed none can know his election of God until he is called. It would be presumption to claim this character until born again; nor should any man conclude himself a reprobate because a sinner, since all men are sinners; even God's elect, who are by nature, and in no wise better than others, but children of wrath, even as others.

There are many objections raised to this doctrine of election; but since it is so clear and plain from Scripture, they amount to mere cavil. It is urged, that God is said to be *good to all, and his tender mercies over all all his works*, (Psalm cxlv. 9,) which seems inconsistent with his choosing some and leaving others; but this is to be understood not of his special grace, but of his providential goodness. It is observed that Christ says he was sent not to *condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved*, and, therefore, not a part only but all. But it is unreasonable to understand this of all the individuals in the world, because all are not saved. By the world is meant the world of God's elect, whom he was reconciling in Christ, and for whom Christ gave his life, and became the propitiation for their sins, even for all the chosen throughout the whole world, and particularly among the Gentiles. Nor is 1 Tim. ii. 4, any objection to this doctrine, *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;* for all men are not eventually saved, nor do all come to the knowledge of the truth of the Gospel; nor, indeed, have all the means of that knowledge. But the sense is, either that all are saved whom God wills to be saved; or that it is his will that men of all sorts and of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, should be saved; which

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agrees with the context. And when it is said of God, that he is *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*, (2 Pet. iii. 9,) it must be interpreted, not of all mankind, but of the elect, to whom this and the preceding epistle are inscribed, and who are styled *beloved*, and in this verse. Now it is the will and pleasure of God that none of those should perish, but all in due time be brought to faith in Christ, and to repentance towards God.

CHAPTER III.

THE DECREE OF REJECTION OF SOME ANGELS AND OF SOME MEN.

The word *rejection* is used in this article, partly because it is a Scriptural phrase, and partly because it is that act of God which gives the name of reprobate—*reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them;* (Jer. vi. 30,) but chiefly because the other word, *reprobation*, from wrong ideas affixed to it, carries in it, with many, a sound harsh and disagreeable. This doctrine of rejecting some angels and some men from the divine favor, is spoken of but sparingly in Scripture, yet clearly and plainly; though it is chiefly left to be concluded from that of election, and from whence it most naturally and rationally follows.

The rejection of some of the angels consists of two parts. In the first place, a non-election, or preterition, a passing over or by them, when others were chosen.

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For if some were elect, others must be non-elect. Both were considered alike, upon an equal footing, when the one were elected and the other not. God, of those he could and would create, determined to choose some and leave others. To some angels God decreed to give, and did give, grace to confirm them in the state in which they were created. These are the elect angels who are said to be *mighty*, and to *excel in strength;* not only in natural, but in spiritual strength. To others he decreed not to give confirming grace, but deny it; and which he was not obliged to give, it being what could not be challenged by the laws and dues of creation, and a mere favor to those on whom it was bestowed; wherefore the others were left to the mutability of their will, which is that weakness and folly with which the angels were chargeable in their creation-state. (Job iv. 18.) Hence of their own free-will they sinned and fell, and left their habitation. (2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude, *v.* 6.)

In the next place is their appointment to wrath and damnation. In this they were viewed as sinful, fallen creatures. This decree is meant by their being *reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*, (Jude, *v.* 6; 2 Pet. ii. 4,) for by *chains* are meant the purposes and decrees of God, by which they are bound and held fast, and from which they cannot loose themselves. They are reserved *under darkness;* being deprived of that light and knowledge they had; and also being under horror and black despair, without the least gleam of the light of joy and comfort. And they are appointed and reserved *to the judgment of the great day*, to the great day of the last judgment; when they will be brought forth in chains

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before the judgment-seat of Christ, and have their final sentence passed and executed, which as yet seems not to have been done. (Matt. viii. 29.) Then will Christ sit on the throne of judgment, and saints will stand by, together with the good angels, as approvers of the righteous sentence; and, therefore, saints are said to *judge angels*, as well as the world of the ungodly. (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.)

The Decree concerning the Rejection of some of the Sons of Men.

We can hear and read of the non-election and rejection of angels, and of their preordination to condemnation and wrath, with very little emotion of mind. The devils may be cast down to hell, to be everlastingly damned, and be appointed thereunto, and it gives no great concern. No hard thoughts against God arise, no charge of cruelty, want of kindness to his creatures and offspring, and of injustice to them; but if any thing of this kind is hinted at with respect to any of the apostate sons of Adam, presently there is an outcry against it; and all the above ideas are suggested. What is the reason of this difference? It can only be that the latter comes nearer home. But God has not spared one of the angels that sinned, provided no saviour for them; but consigned them all over at once to everlasting wrath and ruin.

1. There is a non-election, or rejection, of some of the children of men, when others were chosen; and, indeed, from the election of some may fairly be inferred the non-election of others. Our Lord says, *I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen*, (John xiii. 18,) plainly intimating that all were not chosen, and it is

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certain one was not, whom he calls *the son of perdition.* The elect are God's people, whom he knows; but of others Christ says, *I never knew you.* He knew them by his omniscience, but never as the objects of his love. And our Lord says of these persons, *Ye are not of my sheep,* and gives this as a reason why they believed not on him. (John x. 26.) But the goats he will place on his left hand, pass sentence of condemnation on them, and send them into everlasting punishment. (Matt. xxv. 33, 41, 46.)

Moreover, whom God has predestinated, or chosen to life and happiness, these he glorifies. (Rom. viii. 30.) But are all glorified? do not some go into perdition, even into everlasting punishment? To all which may be added, that those that are given to Christ, (which is but another phrase for being chosen in him,) he says, shall come to him, and he will in no wise cast them out; yea, that they are his sheep, whom he must bring to his Father, to himself, to his fold, to grace and glory. (John vi. 37; and x. 16.) But there are some whom Christ will drive away from him, saying, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire.* (Matt. vii. 23; and xxv. 41.) All this most clearly and fully proves, that there are some who are not chosen of God, but rejected by him.

2. The parts of this decree, concerning the rejection of men, are commonly said to be preterition and predamnation.

Preterition is God's passing by some men, when he chose others. In this men are considered as not created and so not fallen; but as unborn, and having done neither good nor evil. (Rom. ix. 11.) And this is a pure act of sovereignty in God, who has the same sovereign power

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and greater than the potter has over his clay, to make one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor. (Rom. ix. 19, 20, 22.) This being expressed by negative phrases, is, by some, called negative reprobation.

Pre-damnation is God's appointment, or pre-ordination of men to condemnation for sin; and is what is spoken of in Jude. *v.* 4: *There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation;* and who are described by the following characters, *ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and,* or *even our Lord Jesus Christ;* which, when observed, is sufficient to clear this decree of God from the charge of cruelty and injustice. And this, by some, is called positive reprobation. The word *krima* translated *condemnation,* in the above quoted text, some render *judgment,* and interpret it to mean judicial blindness and hardness of heart. And this is, indeed, what they are foreordained or appointed to, as a punishment for former sins; for this hardness, &c. presupposes former sins and an obstinate continued course in them. God hardens some men's hearts, as he did Pharaoh's, and he hardens them according to his decreeing will: *Whom he will he hardeneth.* (Rom. ix. 18.) This he does not by any positive act, by infusing hardness and blindness into the hearts of men; which is contrary to his purity and holiness, and would make him the author of sin; but by leaving them to their natural blindness and hardness of heart. For the understanding is naturally darkened; and there is a natural blindness, hardness and callousness of heart through the corruption of nature, and which is increased by habits of sin. Men are in darkness, and choose to

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walk in it; and, therefore, God, as he decreed, gives them up to their own wills and desires, and to Satan, the god of the world, who blinds their minds yet more and more, lest light should break in unto them, (Eph. iv. 18; Psalm lxxxii. 5; 2 Cor. iv. 4,) and also God may be said to harden and blind, by denying them that grace which can only cure them of their hardness and blindness, and which he, of his free favor, gives to his chosen ones. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.) Hence this blindness, hardness, insensibility and stupidity, are represented as following upon non-election; not as the immediate effect of it, but as consequences.

It is said of some wicked men, who are *reserved* in the purposes and decrees of God, *to the day of destruction; that they shall be brought to the day of wrath*, and hence the casting of the fury of his wrath is called *the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him of God.* (Job xxi. 30, and xx. 23—29.) And this is the sense of Prov. xvi. 4, and not, as some misrepresent it, as if God made man to damn him. The sentiment is, that God made man neither to damn nor save him, but for his own glory; and he will be glorified in him, in one way or another. Equally perverted is the inference that he made man wicked, in order to damn him; for God made man upright; men made themselves wicked by their own inventions. The true sense of the passage is, that *the Lord hath made*, that is, has appointed *all things for himself*, for his own glory. And should it be objected, that the wicked could not be for his glory, it is added, *Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil;* that is, he has appointed the wicked for the day of evil,

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to suffer justly for their sins, to the illustration of the glory of his justice.

III. *The Causes of this Act.*

The efficient cause is God; it is the Lord, who makes all things for his own glory, and the wicked for the day of evil; it is God who appoints to wrath, and foreordains to condemnation; what if *God willing to show his wrath*, &c. (Prov. xvi. 4; 1 Thess. v. 9; Rom ix. 22.) It is an act of his sovereignity, agreeable to his justice and goodness. *Is thine eye evil*, says he, *because I am good?* (Matt. xx. 15.) What distinguishing grace and goodness has been exercised towards fallen man, when no degree of sparing mercy was shown to fallen angels! with what lenity, patience, forbearance and *long-suffering*, has God endured *the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction* —fitted by themselves! (Rom. ii. 4, and ix. 22.) This act of God is neither contrary to the mercy, wisdom, truth or sincerity of God.

The moving or impulsive cause with God in making such a decree, by which he has rejected some of the race from his favor, is not sin, but the good pleasure of his will. Sin is the meritorious cause of eternal death, wrath and damnation. Wrath is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, and comes upon the children of disobedience. The wages, or demerit of sin, is death, even death eternal. But then it is not the impulsive cause of the decree itself, nor of preterition, nor of predamnation. God, indeed, damns no man but for sin; nor did he decree to damn any but for sin; but yet, though sin is the cause of damnation and death, the thing decreed, it is not the cause of the decree itself. It is the cause of the thing willed,

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but not the moving cause of God's will; for nothing out of God can move his will. Besides, if sin was the cause of the decree itself, or of God's will to reject men, then all would be rejected, since all fell in Adam.

4. The date of this decree is as ancient as eternity itself. Wicked men are *before of old*, said to be *ordained to condemnation.* (Jude, *v.* 4.) Some who would have the word rendered, *before written*, suppose the text refers to a written prophecy, concerning the condemnation of those men, and that regard is had to a parallel place in 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. But Jude in that view, would never have said that they were *of old* a long time ago, before written, and prophesied of; for according to the common calculation, that epistle of Peter was written in the same year with this of Jude. If men were chosen from the beginning, that is, from eternity to salvation; then those not chosen, or not ordained to eternal life, were foreordained as early to condemnation; and so is the Syriac version of the text in Jude, *were from the beginning ordained.* And, indeed, there can be no new decree, appointment or purpose, made by God in time. If the decree of election was from eternity, that of rejection must be so too; since the one cannot be without the other.

5. The properties of this decree will appear to be much the same with those of the decree of election, and need but be mentioned; as that it is eternal, free, sovereign, immutable, irrevocable, of particular persons and most just and righteous.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE ETERNAL UNION TO GOD OF THE ELECT.

THE union of God's elect unto him, their adoption by him, justification before him, and acceptance with him, being eternal, internal and immanent acts in God, properly follow in this place.

This union is the going forth of his heart in love to them, thereby uniting them to himself, which love, as it is from everlasting. (Jer. xxxi. 3; John xvii. 23, 24,) so it is of a cementing and uniting nature; and, indeed, is the bond of union between God and his chosen people. Love is the bond of union among men. It was this which knit the soul of Jonathan to the soul of David, so that he loved him as his own soul. It is the bond of the saints' union to each other. Their hearts are *knit together in love;* and hence *charity*, or love, is called *the bond of perfectness*, or the perfect bond, which joins and keeps them together. (Col. ii. 7, and iii. 14.) It was love which so closely cemented the hearts of the first Christians to one another, insomuch that the multitude of them were *of one heart and of one soul.* (Acts iv. 32.) And love must operate infinitely more strongly in the heart of God, attracting and uniting the objects of it to himself, giving them a nearness and union to him which cannot be dissolved. Nothing can *separate from the love of God* —not the fall of God's elect in Adam; nor their actual sins and transgressions in a state of unregeneracy; nor their revoltings and backslidings after conversion. (Rom. viii. 38, 39; Eph. ii. 3, 4; Hos. xiv. 4.) This

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bond of union is indissoluble by the joint power of men and devils. In virtue of this, the people of God become a part of himself, a near, dear and tender part, even as the apple of his eye. They have a place in his heart, are engraven on the palms of his hands, and ever in his thoughts. The desire and affections of his soul are always towards them, and he is ever devising and forming schemes for their welfare. How great is his goodness which he has laid up and wrought for them! (Zech. ii. 8; Psalm cxxxix. 17; Cant. vii. 10; Isa. xlix. 16; Psalm xxxi. 19.)

The love of Christ to the elect, is as early as that of his Father's love to him and them, and which, it seems, was a love of complacency and delight; for before the world was his *delights were with the sons of men.* (John xv. 9; Prov. viii. 30, 31.) It is this which causes him to stick closer than a brother to his people; and nothing can separate from his love to them, any more than from the love of the Father. Having loved his own, he loves them to the end. The same may be said of the love of the Spirit; for it is the everlasting love of God, Father, Son and Spirit, which is the bond of the union of God's elect to the sacred three.

Election, which presupposes love, gives a being in Christ, a kind of subsistence in him; though not an actual being, yet at least a representative being. In election a near relation commences between Christ and the elect. He is given to be a head to them, and they are given as members to him; and as such they are chosen together, he first in order of nature, as the head; and then they as members of him.

There is a federal union between Christ and the elect,

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and they have a covenant subsistence in him as their head and representative. The covenant flows from, and is the effect of the love, grace and mercy of God. This covenant was made with Christ not as a single person, but as a common head; not for himself, or on his own account only, but for and on the account of his people; as the covenant of works was made with Adam, as the federal head of all his posterity; hence he is said to be the figure or type of him that was to come, (Rom. v. 14,) so the covenant of grace was made with Christ as the federal head of his spiritual offspring; and for this reason a parallel is ran between them in Rom. v. and 1 Cor. xv. as if they had been the only two men in the world, the one called the first, the other the second man. Christ represented his people in this covenent, and they had a representative union to him.

There is a legal union between Christ and the elect, the bond of which is his suretyship for them, flowing from his strong love and affection to them. In this respect Christ and they are one in the eye of the law, as the bondsman and debtor are one in a legal sense; so that if one of them pays the debt, it is the same as if the other did. Christ is the surety of the better testament; he drew nigh to God, gave his bond, laid himself under obligation to pay the debts of his people, and satisfy for their sins.

In short, it is the saints' antecedent union and relation to Christ in eternity, in the several views in which it has been considered, which is the ground and reason of all that Christ has done and suffered for them, and not for others. In a word, union to Christ is the first thing, the first blessing of grace flowing from love and effected

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by it; and hence is the application of all others: *of him are ye in Christ Jesus*, first loved and united to Christ, and then it follows, *who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.* (1 Cor. i. 30.)

CHAPTER V.

ADOPTION AND JUSTIFICATION.

These doctrines are not here treated in their full extent, or as blessings of grace actually bestowed, with all the privileges and advantages arising from thence; or as transcient acts passing on them, and terminating in their consciences at believing; but as internal and immanent acts, taken up in the mind of God from eternity, and which abide in his will, in which they have their complete being. In the other view they will be considered hereafter.

I. *Adoption.*

As in election, the complete essence of adoption lies in his will. And the latter may be considered as a branch of, or of the same nature with the former. The word *adopto*, from whence comes *adoption*, is compoundod of *ad* to, and *opto* to choose. The Greek word for adoption throughout the New Testament is υιοθεσια, which signifies *putting among the children;* the phrase used by God, (Jer. iii. 19,) *How shall I put them among the children?* or a putting for and in the room of a son. Divine adoption is an act of the sover-

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eign grace and good-will of God, (Eph. i. 5,) to persons exceedingly unworthy and undeserving, and is an act of distinguishing grace. It is of men, and not angels—who are servants and not sons, (at least not by adoption)—of some men and not of all, though all are alike in their nature-state; and it is a most amazing act of unmerited love and free grace. (1 John iii. 1.)

1. It did not begin in time, but commenced from eternity. It is an act of God's will, and has its complete essence in it.

It is an act that does not first take place at believing; indeed the saints are *all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*, openly and manifestatively; (Gal. iii. 26,) but then it is not faith that makes them children, but what makes them appear to be so. Adoption is the act of God, and not of faith. It is God who says, *How shall I put them among the children?* and again, *I will be their Father, and they shall be my sons and daughters.* (Jer. iii. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 18.) It is the province of faith to receive the blessing of adoption, which it could not do, unless it had been previously provided in the mind and by the will of God, and in the covenant of his grace. For God has appointed faith to be the general receiver of Christ, and of all the blessings of grace through him, and to *as many as receive Christ* he gives power, authority, dignity and privilege *to become the sons of God* openly. Adoption does not first commence at regeneration. Adoption and regeneration are two distinct blessings, and the one is previous to the other, though they are commonly confounded together by divines. Regeneration is not the foundation of adoption, but adoption the foundation of regeneration; or, the

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reason why men are adopted is not because they are regenerated, but they are regenerated because they are adopted. By adoption they are put into the relation of children, and by regeneration they have a nature given them suitable to that relation; and are made partakers of the divine nature, that they may be made known to be heirs apparent to, and to have a meetness for the possession, enjoyment and use of the inheritance they are adopted to. The act of adoption is previous to any work of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of his people: *Because ye are sons*, sons already, sons by adopting grace; *God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts*, both to convince, convert, regenerate and effectually call by his grace, and sanctify, and also to comfort, and to enable to cry Abba Father, witnessing to their spirits, that they are the children of God; and hence he is called *the Spirit of Adoption;* and it is his influences, teachings and leadings which are the evidences of adoption: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*—not that those influences, operations and leadings make them, but make them evident to be such. (Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 14, 15, 16.) Divine adoption, or sonship, took place before any work of Christ was wrought in time, for any of the sons of men; it was before his incarnation and birth; *forasmuch then*, or because *the children are partakers of flesh and blood*, the children of God, who are so by adopting grace; therefore *he also*, Christ, *himself took part of the same;* for though the nature he assumed was what was in common to all mankind, yet he assumed it with a peculiar view to the children of God, the spiritual seed of Abraham; whose nature he is said to take, and for

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whose sake he was the Child born, and the Son given, (Isa. ix. 6; Heb. ii. 14, 16,) and consequently they must be the children of God before Christ suffered and died. Indeed, he suffered and died for them under this character, considered as the children of God by adopting grace; for he died not only for the elect of God among the *Jews, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad:* that is, those who were already the children of God by adopting grace, who were scattered throughout the whole Gentile world. This relates to the gathering of all the elect in one, in Christ, in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

2. Adoption is an act of God's free grace from all eternity. The elect of God are frequently spoken of as a distinct number of men, given to Christ, and as previous to their coming to him by faith, which is the certain fruit and consequence of that gift. They were given to Christ before the world was. Now these were given to Christ in the relation of children, and, therefore, must be children so early: *Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me.* (Heb. ii. 13.) The elect of God being betrothed to Christ, the Son of God, in eternity, as they were the spouse of Christ, they must be, and must be considered as being the sons of God so early. They were taken by him into the covenant of his grace, as children; the sum and substance of which runs thus: *I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty.* (2 Cor. vi. 18.) Predestination to the adoption of children is mentioned with election, as of the same date, and as an illustration of it.

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Justification.

This is an act of Gods grace, flowing from his sovereign good will and pleasure. The elect of God are said to be *justified by his grace;* and as if that expression was not strong enough to set forth its freeness, the word *freely* is added elsewhere: *Being justified freely by his grace.* (Tit. iii. 7; Rom. iii. 24.) Justification is by many divines distinguished into active and passive. Active justification is the act of God; it is God that justifies. Passive justification is the act of God, terminating on the conscience of a believer, commonly called a transcient act, passing upon an external objeet. It is of the former we now speak, which is an act internal and eternal, taken up in the divine mind from eternity, immanent and abiding. It is, as Dr. Ames'* expresses it, "a sentence conceived in the divine mind, by the decree of justifying." Now, as before observed, as God's will to elect, is the election of his people, so his will to justify them is the justification of them; as it is an immanent act in God, it is an act of his grace towards them, is wholly without them, entirely resides in the divine mind, and lies in his estimating, accounting and constituting them righteous, through the righteousness of his Son; and, as such, did not first commence in time, but from eternity.

1. It does not begin to take place in time, or at believing, but is antecedent to any act of faith. Faith is not the cause, but an effect of justification: *Being justified freely by his grace,* (Rom. iii. 24,) *It is God that justifies.* (Rom. viii. 33.) Mr. Baxter† argues, "If

* Medulla Theologiæ, l. 1. c. 27. s. 9.

† Aphorism. 56.

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faith is the instrument of our justification, it is the instrument either of God or man; not of man, for justification is God's act; he is the sole Justifier, (Rom. iii. 26,) man doth not justify himself: nor of God, for it is not God who believes." Faith is the evidence and manifestation of justification, and, therefore, justification must precede it: *Faith is the evidence of things not seen,* (Heb. xi. 1,) but is not the evidence of that which as yet is not. Justification is the object, and faith the act that is conversant with it. Now every object is prior to the act, unless when an act gives being to the object, which is not the case here. Faith receives the blessing of justification from the Lord, even that righteousness by which it is justified, from the God of its salvation; but this blessing must exist before faith can receive it. (Psalm xxiv. 5.) All the elect of God were justified in Christ, their Head and Representative, when he rose from the dead, and, therefore, they believe. When he rose, they rose with him; and when he was justified, they were justified in him; for he was *delivered for their offences, and was raised again for their justification.* (Rom. iv. 25.) And such is the opinion of many sound and learned divines: as Sandford,* Dr. Goodwin,† the learned Amesius,‡ Hornbeck,§ Witsius‖ and others.

2. Justification is not only before faith, but it is from eternity, being an immanent act in the divine mind. The objects of justification are God's elect: *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that*

* De Descensu Christi. l. 3, s. 30. p. 59.
† Works, vol. 4. part 1. p. 105, 106.
‡ Medulla ut supra.
§ Summa Controvers. 1. 10. p. 705.
‖ Animadv. Irenic c. 10. s. 2.

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justifies; that is the elect. Now if God's elect, as such, are by God justified; and if they bore this character of elect from eternity, then they must be acquitted, discharged and justified so early, so as nothing could be laid to their charge. Justification may well be considered as a branch of election; it is, as one expresses it, setting apart the elect alone to be partakers of Christ's righteousness; and a setting apart Christ's righteousness for the elect only. It is mentioned with election, as of the same date. Of the objections made to this truth some are so trifling as to deserve no notice. A few of the principal ones may deserve an answer, and chiefly those urged by the learned Turretine.*

It is objected, that men cannot be justified before they exist; they must *be*, before they can be justified; since *non entis nulla sunt accidentia*, &c. of a nonentity nothing can be said, nor to it any thing ascribed. Whatever there is in this objection, lies as strongly against eternal election, as against eternal justification. The above is true of non-entities, that have neither an *esse actu*, nor an *esse cognitum*, that have neither an actual being, nor of which any future being is certain or known. But though God's elect have not an actual being from eternity, yet it is certain, by the prescience and predetermination of God, that they shall have, for *known unto God are all his works from the beginning*, or from eternity. (Acts xv. 18.) And they have an *esse representativum*, a representative being in Christ; which is more than other creatures have, whose future existencies are certain.

* Institut. Theolog. tom. 2. loc. 16. qu. 9. s. 8.

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It is further objected, that if God's elect are justified from eternity, then they were not only justified before they themselves existed, but before any sin was committed by them; and it seems absurd that men should be justified from sins before committed, or any charge of them brought against them. To which may be replied, that it is no more absurd to say, that God's elect were justified from their sins before they were committed, than it is to say, that they were imputed to Christ, and he died for them, and made satisfaction for them before committed; which is most certainly true of all those who live since the coming and death of Christ.

It is urged, that strictly and accurately speaking, it cannot be said that justification is eternal, because the decree of justification is one thing, and justification itself another; even as God's will of sanctifying is one thing, and sanctification itself another; wherefore, though the decree of justification is eternal, and precedes faith, that itself is in time, and follows it. To which it may be answered, that as God's decree and will to elect men to everlasting life and salvation, is his election of them; and his will not to impute sin to them, is the non-imputation of it; and his will to impute the righteousness of Christ unto them, is the imputation of it to them; so his decree, or will to justify them, is the justification of them, as that is an immanent act in God which has its complete essence in his will, is entirely within himself, and not transcient on an external subject, producing any real, physical, inherent change in it, as sanctification is and does. It is one thing for God to will to act an act of grace concerning men, another thing to will to

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work a work of grace in them; in the former case the will of God is his act of justification; in the latter it is not his act of sanctification. Wherefore, though the will of God to justify, is justification itself, that being a complete act in his eternal mind; yet his will to sanctify is not sanctification, because that is a work wrought in men, and not only requires their actual existence, but an exertion of powerful and efficacious grace upon them. Were justification, as the papists say, by an infusion of inherent righteousness in men, there would be some strength in the objection, but this is not the case.

It is observed, that the apostle, reckoning up in order the benefits which flow from the love of God to the elect in his famous chain of salvation, sets vocation before justification, as something antecedent to it, (Rom. viii. 30,) from whence it is concluded, that vocation is in order of time, before justification. The order of things in Scripture is frequently inverted. The Jews have a saying,* that there is nothing prior and posterior in the law; that is, that the order of things is not strictly observed; but the order is changed, and, therefore, nothing can strictly be concluded from thence. Even the order of persons in the Trinity is not always observed; sometimes the Son is placed before the Father, and the holy Spirit before them both; which, though it may be an argument for their equality, does not destroy the order. And so with respect to vocation, it may be observed, that it is sometimes placed before election, (2 Pet. i. 10,) but none but an Arminian would argue from thence, that it is really before it in order of time, or that men are not elected until they are called. On the

* T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 6. 2.

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other hand, salvation is placed before vocation: (2 Tim. i. 9,) *Who hath saved us and called us*, &c. from whence we might, with as great propriety, argue, that salvation, and so justification, precedes vocation; as to argue from the other text in Romans, that vocation precedes justification, in order of time. Indeed, nothing is to be concluded with certainty, one way or another, from such modes and forms of expression. Justification, as a transient and declarative act, follows vocation; but as an immanent act in God, which is the present subject of attention, it goes before it.

It is affirmed, that those various passages of Scripture, where we are said to be justified through faith, and by faith, only tend to show that faith is something prerequisite to justification, which cannot be said if justification was from eternity. To which the answer is, that those Scriptures which speak of justification, through and by faith, do not militate against, nor disprove justification before faith; for though justification by and before faith differ, yet they are not opposite and contradictory. They differ, the one being an immanent act in God; all which sort of acts are eternal, and so before faith; the other being a transient declarative act, terminating on the conscience of the believer; and so is by and through faith, and follows it. But these do not contradict each other, the one being a declaration and manifestation of the other.

It is urged that the apostle says, (1 Cor. vi. 11,) *Now ye are justified;* as if they were not justified before. But the word *now*, is not in the text; and if it were it does not follow that they were not justified before, for so they might be *in foro dei*, in the court of God, yet

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not till now be justified in *foro conscientiæ*, in their own consciences, and by the Spirit of God; which is the justification the apostle is there speaking of. Finally, the sentence of justification pronounced on Christ, the representative of his people, when he rose from the dead, and that which is pronounced by the Spirit of God in the consciences of believers, and that which will be pronounced before men and angels at the general judgment, are only so many repetitions, or renewed declarations, of that grand original sentence conceived in the mind of God from all eternity; which is the eternal justification pleaded for; and is what many eminent divines of the highest character for learning and judgment, have asserted, as before observed. And it is to such Dr. Owen refers, in reply to Mr. Baxter, who charged him with holding eternal justification: "I neither am, nor ever was of that judgment; though, as it may be explained, I know *better, wiser* and *more learned* men than myself, (and he might have added, than Mr. Baxter,) that *have* been, and *are*."

CHAPTER VI.

THE EVERLASTING COUNCIL BETWEEN THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS, CONCERNING THE SALVATION OF MEN.

We next consider the operations and transactions among the three divine persons when alone, before the world began, or any creature was in being; and which are chiefly the council and covenant of God respecting

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the salvation of men. These are generally blended together by divines; and, indeed, it is difficult to consider them distinctly with exactness and precision. But they may be distinguished, the one as leading on, preparatory and introductory to the other, though both are of an eternal date.

The Council of God held between the Three Divine Persons, concerning Man's Salvation.

1. Council, consultation and deliberation as ascribed to God, is not to be understood as expressive of any want of knowledge, or of hesitation in forming the scheme of salvation. Nor does a council held between the three divine persons suppose any inequality, though with men, in matters of moment and difficulty, persons supposed to be of superior abilities are consulted, and their judgment taken.

Nor is consultation in God continued and protracted as it often is with men. When consultation about the salvation of man is ascribed to God, it is intended to express the importance of it. Not about things trifling, but upon those of importance do men consult and deliberate, and such is the work of men's salvation. This way of speaking, and this form of speech is used to set forth the wisdom of God displayed herein, as schemes, which are the fruit of consultation and deliberation, are generally the most wisely formed. As the result of a council between the three divine persons it shows their unanimity in it.

2. Observing these points, various proofs may be adduced that there was a council between the divine

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persons concerning the salvation of men. An argument may be drawn from the purpose of God; all whose purposes are called his counsels because they are founded in the highest wisdom. (Isa. xxv. 1.) For the scheme of salvation, which is *the manifold wisdom of God*, is *according to the eternal purpose which he* (God the Father) *purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Eph. iii. 10, 11.) The Gospel, which is an exhibition and declaration of the scheme of salvation, is called the *council of God.* (Acts xx. 27.) It is a reasonable conclusion from the consultation had between the divine Persons, concerning the formation of man, thus expressed: *And God said, Let us make man in our image.* It may be reasonably argued, that if there was a consultation of the divine Persons about the creation of man at first, then much more about his redemption and salvation. A passage is found in Zech. vi. 13: *And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.* Some, indeed, interpret it to relate to the Kingly and Priestly offices meeting in Christ, as it is before said, *He shall be a priest upon the throne;* but it seems rather to respect persons and things. Rather by the *counsel of peace*, may be meant the Gospel, called the counsel of God, and the Gospel of peace. But there is another meaning embraced by learned men, such as Heidegger,* De Dieu,† Cocceius,‡ Witsius,§ Dr. Owen‖ and others, that this respects the council concerning the peace and reconciliation in eternity, between Jehovah and the Branch, between the Father and the

* Corpus Theolog. loc. 11. s. 12. p. 376.
† In loc.
‡ Summa de Fœdere, c. 5. s. 88.
§ Oeconom. Fœderum, l. 2. c. 1. s. 7, 8.
‖ In Hebrews, vol. 2. Exercitat. 4. s. 10. p. 54.

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Son, who in time was to become man. The objections to this have been that this council in eternity was between the three Persons, and not two only; and that that is what is past; whereas this is spoken of as future. But as Jehovah and the Branch are the only Persons mentioned in the text, and so those only could with propriety be spoken of, though the council was between the three. And in the Hebrew language, tenses are frequently put for one another, the past for the future, and so the future for the past. That there has been such a transaction between the Father and the Son, which, with propriety enough, may be called the *council of peace*, we have sufficient warrant from 2 Cor. v. 19: *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses.* By the *world* is meant the elect of God, which he so loved, as to send his Son to be their Saviour. God was in Christ, or with Christ, consulting, contriving and planning the scheme, which was not to impute their sins unto them, but to Christ, now called to be their Saviour. And this contains the sum of what is meant by the council of peace.

The subject of consultation was not the salvation of men merely, nor the selection of persons who should be saved, for both were resolved on in the decree of election, which stands firm and sure on the unalterable will of God; but it was who should be the Saviour, or the author of this salvation. By the decree of election the vessels of mercy were prepared for glory, or were ordained to eternal life. God resolved to have mercy on them and save them; but the question who should be the Saviour, was referred to this council. It is true, indeed, that this was, in some respects, involved and

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included in the Father's purpose, according to election, who appointed some, not unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. v. 9.) But although this was in the Father's purpose, it was necessary that the will of the Son should be expressed, and his approbation and consent had, for which this council was called and held.

The case stands thus: it was in Jehovah the Father's thoughts to save men by his Son; who he saw in his infinite wisdom to be most fit for this work, and, in his own mind, chose him to it; and this is meant by laying help on One that is mighty, exalting one chosen from among the people; finding David his servant, and anointing him with his holy oil. (Psal. lxxxix. 19, 20.) Now in the eternal council he moved it and proposed it to his Son, as the most advisable step that could be taken to bring about the designed salvation, and the Son readily agreed to it, and said, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.* (Heb. x. 7; from Psal. xl. 7, 8.) And the holy Spirit expressed his approbation by joining with the Father in the mission, and by forming his human nature in time, and filling it with his gifts and graces without measure. The pleasure and satisfaction the three divine Persons had in this affair, thus advised to, consulted and approved of, is most clearly to be seen and observed at our Lord's baptism. (Matt. iii. 16, 17.)

And it was in this council consulted as to the manner in which it should be effected, both for the security of men, and for the display of the glory of the divine perfections. It should be observed, that the elect of God, the persons to be saved, were considered in this transaction as fallen creatures, which salvation by Christ sup-

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poses; as sinners in Adam, on whom judgment came unto condemnation; as obnoxious to the curses of the righteous law, and to the resentments of divine justice; and, therefore, satisfaction was to be made to the law and justice of God, the law was to be fulfilled, and justice satisfied, by an atonement. This was signified to the Saviour found, who approved of it, as a thing most fit to be done; hence God is gracious, and saith, *Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom*, (Job xxxiii. 24.) And whereas this ransom, satisfaction and atonement must be made by obeying the precepts of the law, and by suffering the penalty of death which the law required of the transgressor, *Thou shalt surely die;* it demanded the same of the Surety. Wherefore, since it was necessary that the Captain and Author of salvation, in bringing many sons to glory, should be made perfect through sufferings, it was proper that he should assume a nature in which he would be capable of obeying and suffering, even a nature of the same kind with that which sinned. This was notified in council to the Son of God, and he approved of it as right and fit, and said, *A body hast thou prepared me*, a whole human nature, in purpose; and now in council, signified that he was ready to assume it in time. Moreover, it was seen proper and advisable that the human nature assumed, should be holy and pure from sin, that it might be offered up without spot to God; and be a sacrifice to take away sin, which it could not be, if sinful. Now here a difficulty arises, how such a nature could be found since human nature would be defiled by the sin of Adam; and who would be able to bring a clean thing out of an unclean? This difficulty infinite

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wisdom surmounts by proposing that the Saviour shou ₄ be born by a virgin; that this individual nature to be assumed, should not descend from Adam by ordinary generation, but be formed in an extraordinary manner by the power of the Holy Ghost; and this was approved in council, by both the Son and Spirit, since the one readily assumed this nature in this way, and the other formed it. Once more, it appeared necessary that this nature should be taken up into personal union with the Son of God; or, that the Saviour should be God and man in one person; that he should be man, that he might have somewhat to offer, and thereby make reconciliation for the sins of the people; and that he should be God, to give virtue to his deeds and suffering, to make them effectual to the purposes of them, and he be a fit Mediator, a day's-man between God and men, and take care of the things belonging to both. In short, the affair debated and consulted between the three divine persons, was the peace and reconciliation of God's elect by Christ, and the way and manner of doing it; and, therefore, as before observed, this transaction may, with great propriety, be called *the council of peace;* and which issued in a covenant of peace, next to be considered. In this council every thing relative to it was advised, consulted and contrived; and in the covenant the whole was adjusted and settled; and, therefore, the council may be considered as the preparation and introduction to the covenant.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT OF GRACE, BETWEEN THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The council before treated of, is the basis and foundation of the covenant of grace, and both relate to the same thing, and in which the same persons are concerned. In the former, schemes were contrived, planned and advised; in the latter, fixed and settled. The covenant of grace is a compact or agreement made from all eternity among the divine Persons, more especially between the Father and the Son, concerning the salvation of the elect.

The Hebrew word for *covenant*, throughout the Old Testament, is *Berith;* which, by different persons, is derived from different roots. There are a set of men* lately risen up, who derive the word from *Barar*, which signifies to *purify;* and because the word we translate *make*, which usually goes along with *covenant*, signifies to *cut off*, they warmly contend, that wherever we meet with this phrase, it should be rendered, *cut off the Purifier*, by whom they understand the Lord Jesus Christ. Though it will be allowed, that Christ is sometimes called a Refiner and Purifier, (Mal. iii. 3,) yet not by any word or name derived from this root; nor is it reasonable that a *Purifier*, or *he that purifies*, should be expressed by a noun feminine, as *Berith* is. And though such a version of the phrase may happen to suit tolerably well

* Called Hutchinsonians.

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with a passage or two; yet there are many places in which, were it so rendered, no sense could be made of them. But the word *Berith, covenant*, may rather be derived, as it more commonly is, either from *Bara*, which, in its first sense signifies to *create;* or from *Barah;* which, among other things, signifies to *eat* food; it being usual, when covenants were made and confirmed, for the parties covenanting, to eat and feast together, and this root also signifies to *select and choose.*

The word used in The New Testament for covenant, is *diatheke*, by which word the *Septuagint* interpretern almost always translate the Hebrew word *berith* in the Old, and it comes from a word which signifies to *dispose*, and that in a covenant-way, as in Luke xxii. 29, where the Father is said to appoint, or dispose by covenant, a kingdom to his Son, as he also is said to appoint or dispose by covenant, a kingdom to his people. Sometimes it denotes a testament, or will, (Heb. ix. 16, 17,) and we shall see the use of the word in this sense hereafter, as it may be applicable to the covenant of grace. The word signifies both covenant and testament, and some have called it a covenant-testament, or a testimentary covenant; hence the different administrations of the covenant of grace in time, are called the first and second, the old and new testament; and even the books of Scripture written under those different dispensations, are so distinguished. (Heb. viii. and ix.; 2 Cor. iii. 6. 14.)

2. The word in Scripture is sometimes used for an ordinance, precept and command. The order for giving the heave-offerings to the sons of Aaron, is called a covenant of salt, a perpetual ordinance, (Num. xviii. 19,)

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the law for releasing servants after six years service, has the name of a covenant, (Jer. xxxiv. 13, 14,) and this may account for the Decalogue, or Ten Commands, being called a covenant, (Deut. iv. 13,) for whatsoever God enjoins men, they are under an obligation to observe. A covenant, when ascribed to God, is often nothing more than a mere promise: *This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my Spirit that is upon thee,* &c. (Isa. lix. 21.) Hence we read of *covenants of promise,* or promissory covenants, (Eph. ii. 12,) and, indeed, the covenant of grace, with respect to the elect, is nothing but a free promise of eternal life and salvation by Jesus Christ, which includes all other promises of blessings of grace: *This is the promise that he hath promised us,* the grand comprehensive promise, *even eternal life.* (1 John ii. 25.) Whatever condition there is in that covenant it lay only on Christ to perform. He and his work are its only conditions. We often read of covenants of God on only one side. Of this kind is his covenant of the day and of the night, (Jer. xxxiii. 20,) which is simply a promise that these should always continue, without requiring any condition on the part of the creature. (Gen. viii. 22.)

A covenant properly made between man and man, is by stipulation and restipulation, in which they make mutual promises, or conditions. Such was the confederacy between Abraham, Aner, Eshcol and Mamre; the covenant between Abimelech and Isaac, and between David and Jonathan. (Gen. xiv. 13, and xxvi. 28; 1 Sam. xx. 15, 16, 42, and xxiii. 18.) Such a covenant, properly speaking, cannot be made between God and man; for what can man restipulate with God, which

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is in his power to do or give and which God has not a prior right unto? God may, indeed, condescend to promise that to man, which otherwise he is not bound to give; and he may require of man, that which he has no right to refuse, and to which God has a right without his making any such promise; and, therefore, properly speaking, all this cannot formally constitute a covenant, which is to be entered into of free choice on both sides; and especially such a covenant cannot take place in fallen man, who has neither inclination of will to yield the obedience required, nor power to perform it. The covenant of grace made between God and Christ, and with the elect in him, as their Head and Representative is a proper covenant, consisting of stipulation and restipulation. God the Father in it stipulates with his Son, that he shall do such and such work and service, on condition of which he promises to confer such and such honors and benefits on him, and on the elect in him; and Christ the Son of God restipulates and agrees to do all that is proposed and prescribed, and, upon performance, expects and claims the fulfilment of his promises.

3. The names and epithets given to this federal transaction, or covenant of grace, between the Father and Son, both in the Scriptures and among men may deserve some notice, since they may help to give a better and clearer idea of this transaction. It is called *a covenant of life.* (Mal. ii. 5.) Though it is said of Levi, yet of him as a type of Christ; and if the covenant with Levi might be so called, much more that with Christ. Some divines call the covenant of works, made with Adam, a covenant of life, and so it may

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be; but then only as it respected that natural happy life Adam then lived, as it contained a promise of continuance of it, and confirmation in it, should he stand the trial of his obedience; but not a promise of eternal life and happiness, such as the saints enjoy in heaven; a life never designed to be given by, and which could not come through a covenant of works. (see Gal. iii. 21.) But the covenant of grace contains such a promise, a promise that was made by God, who cannot lie, before the world was; that is, a promise made to Christ, in the covenant of grace, from eternity. He asked life of his Father for them in this covenant, and it was given to him, even length of days for ever and ever; and therefore, with great propriety may this covenant be called a covenant of life. (Tit. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 1; Psalm xxi. 4.) It is called *a covenant of peace.* (Mal. ii. 5; Isa. liv. 10.) As the transaction between the eternal Three, in which the plan and method of the peace and reconciliation of God's elect was consulted, may be called *the council of peace;* because that was a principal article considered in it; so, for the same reason, the covenant may be called the covenant of peace. It is commonly called by men, *the covenant of grace;* and properly so since it entirely flows from, and has its foundation in the grace of God. It is owing to the everlasting love and free favour of God the Father, that he proposed a covenant of this kind to his Son; and it is owing to the grace of the Son, that he so freely and voluntarily entered into engagements with his Father—the matter, sum and substance is grace, and the ultimate end and design is the glory of the grace of God. It is by some divines called *the covenant of re-*

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demption; because the redemption of God's elect is a principal article.

4. This covenant is commonly represented as if it were only between the Father and the Son; but the holy Spirit should not be excluded, as in it he is certainly promised both to Head and members; and in consequence of it, is sent down into the hearts of God's covenant-ones, which must be by agreement, and with his consent. And there are some traces and footsteps of all the three Persons, as concerned in it, in the dispensation and manifestation of this covenant to the people of Israel. (Hag. ii. 4, 5.) As in all covenants the contracting parties are distinct from each other. A covenant is not of one, but of more than one. No man properly covenants with himself. Job is, indeed, said to make a covenant with his eyes, (chap. xxxi. 1,) but that was simply a resolution within himself to lay a restraint upon his eyes, to make no use of them in such a manner as might tend to sin. The divine Persons of the sacred Trinity are distinct. And as they are distinct so they have distinct acts of will. Thus their nature being the same, their understanding must be the same; and yet there are distinct acts of the divine understanding, peculiar to each Person; the Father knows the Son, and the Son knows the Father, and they have a distinct knowledge and understanding of one another, and the Spirit knows them both, and they know him. And as their nature and essence, so their affections are the same; and yet there are distinct acts of them, peculiar to each Person; the Father loves the Son, and has put all things into his hands: the Son loves the Father, and in all things obedient to him; the Spirit loves the Father and

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the Son, and they both love him. So of their will, though the same, there are distinct acts peculiar to each Person; and which appear in their covenanting with each other. There is the Father's distinct act of will notified in the covenant, that it is his will and pleasure his Son should be the Saviour of the chosen ones; and there is the Son's distinct act of will notified in the same covenant, he presenting himself, and declaring himself willing, and engaging himself to be the Saviour of them; which distinct acts of the divine will thus notified, formally constituted a covenant between them; and as the holy Spirit dispenses his gifts and grace, the blessings of this covenant, *severally as he will*, (1 Cor. xii. 11,) this is pursuant to an agreement, to a notification of his will in covenant also.

As in all covenants, however, the persons covenanting may be equal in other respects, yet in covenanting there is an inequality and subordination; especially in those covenants in which there is service and work to be done on one side, and a reward to be given in consideration of it on the other; of which nature is the covenant of grace and redemption. And though the contracting parties here are equal in nature, perfections and glory, yet in this covenant-relation voluntarily entered into, there is by agreement and consent a subordination. Hence the Father, the first Person and Party contracting is called by his Son, his Lord and his God, a phrase always expressive of covenant-relation. (Psalm xvi. 2, and xxii. 1, and xl. 8, and xlv. 7; John xx. 17.) And the Son the second Person and Party contracting, is called by the Father his Servant. *Thou art my Servant*, &c. (Isa. xlix. 3.) Hence the Father is said to be *greater than he*,

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(John xiv. 28,) not merely on account of his human nature, but with respect to his covenant-relation to him, and the office-capacity he has taken and sustains. And the Spirit, the third Person and contracting Party is said to be sent both by the Father and the Son, to perform that part which he undertook. And this economy and dispensation of the covenant, thus settled in subordination among themselves by agreement and consent, is done with great propriety and beauty, suitable to their natural relation they bear to each other, as equal divine Persons, for who so proper to be the proposer of terms and to direct and prescribe them, and to exercise a kind of authority, as he who is the first Person in order of nature, and who stands in the relation of a Father to the second Person. And as here was work and service to be done, the salvation of the elect, and that in an inferior nature, in human nature, who so proper to engage in this service, and to assume this nature, and in it yield obedience to the will of God, as the second Person, who stood in the relation of a Son to the First? And with what congruity is the third Person, the holy Spirit, sent by both, to make application of the grace of both; who is said to be their Breath, and to proceed from both. As in all covenants some advantages are proposed and expected by all parties, so it is in this. God's end in all things, in nature, providence and grace, is his own glory, so it is in this covenant, even the glory of Father, Son and Spirit; which must be understood, not of any addition unto, or increase of their essential glory, but of its manifestation. As for the glory promised to Christ, and which he expected and pleaded on his finishing his work, (John xvii. 4, 5,) this was either the manifestation of the

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glory of his divine Person, hid in his state of humiliation; or his glory as Mediator, his kingdom and glory appointed and promised him, upon the performance of his engagements. (Luke xxii. 29; 1 Pet. i. 21; Heb. ii. 9.) Yet even the benefit of this redounds to the advantage of God's elect, (John xvii. 22, 24,) and their salvation and happiness is the grand thing in view in these covenant-transactions: this is *all my salvation.* (2 Sam. xviii. 5.) As the sum of the Gospel which is no other than a transcript of the covenant of grace, is the salvation of lost sinners by Christ; so the covenant, of which that is a copy, chiefly respects that. Hence Christ the Covenantee, has the name of Jesus, because he undertook to save, came to save, and has saved his people from their sins, in consequence of his covenant-engagements.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PART OF THE FATHER IN THE COVENANT.

The Father, the first person in the Trinity, takes the first place in this covenant. *All things are of God*, that is, of God the Father, they are of him originally, they begin with him; all in creation; he has made the world, and created all things by his Son—and so all in the salvation of men, *who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.* He set on foot the council of peace, and so the covenant of peace, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;* that is. God the Father. He

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set on foot the council of peace, and so the covenant of peace, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;* that is, God the Father. He planned the reconciliation of men in council, proposed it in covenant, and settled it with the other two persons; and he is not only the proposer, but the prescriber and enjoiner of conditions in the covenant. He both proposed the work to be done, and took upon him the authority, by agreement, to prescribe and enjoin it. Hence we read of the injunctions and commands laid on Christ with respect to his discharge of his office, as the mediator of this covenant. (John x. 18, and xii. 49, and xiv. 31.) It was the Father who called Christ from the womb of eternity to be his servant, directed and enjoined his work and service, as appears from Isa. xlix. 1—6, and promised him a reward on condition of his performing the service, and to the elect in him, benefits for his sake.

1. The work he proposed to Christ, is the great and only condition of the covenant, and which he prescribed and enjoined him to do. Christ was to take the care and charge of the chosen ones. These, as he chose them in him, he put into his hands, not only as his property, but for their safety; and here they are safe, for none can pluck them out of his hands. Hence they are called *the sheep of his hand*, not only because they are guided by his hand as a flock, but because they are under his care and custody. When they were committed to him, he had this charge given to him by his Father, that *of all* that he had *given* him he *should lose* nothing. And this respects not only their souls which he has redeemed, and does preserve, but also their bodies,

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for the injunction was that he *should loose nothing*, no part of them, not even their dust in their graves, *but should raise it up again at the last day*, (John vi. 39,) as he will do. God not only made a reserve of them in Christ for himself, but they were *preserved in* him, and, therefore, are called the *preserved of Israel.* (Jude *v.* 1; Isa. xlix. 6.) And that Christ, in a covenant-way, by his own consent, was laid under such an obligation to keep and preserve the elect safe to glory, appears both from what he says in his intercessory prayer: *those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost*, (John xvii. 12,) and from what he will say at the last day, when they shall all be brought in: *Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.* (Heb. ii. 13.) Whereas those same Persons made his care and charge, would fall in Adam, with the rest of mankind, he proposed to him, and enjoined it as his will, that he should redeem them from all this; and hence agreeing to it, he was sent to do and has done it. This work, as proposed and prescribed in the covenant of grace, is expressed by various phrases, (Isa. xlix. 5, 6,) as by *bringing Jacob again to him.* By Jacob is meant the elect of God, especially among the Jews, the remnant according to the election of grace; and bringing them again, supposes they were gone aside and apostatized from God. Concerning the Gentiles, our Lord says, *Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring.* And this he says he *must* do, because his Father enjoined it, and he agreed to do it. And the Father proposed to the Son to assume human nature in the fulness of time, which was necessary to the work of redeeming the chosen people, which Christ agreed to do. Another branch

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of the work assigned to Christ, in the covenant, by his Father, and to which he agreed, was to obey the law in the room and stead of his people; to which Christ has respect when he says, *thy law is within my heart*, or I am heartily willing and ready to obey and fulfil it; and which designs not merely the law of mediation, or the command enjoined upon Christ as Mediator with respect to the performance of his several offices as such. Of his prophetic office Christ says, *The Father which sent me he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak——whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.* (John xii. 49, 50.) And of his priestly office, his laying down his life for his people: *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again; this commandment have I received of my Father.* (John x. 18, and xiv. 31.) And with respect to his Kingly office: *I will declare the decree;* that is, of his Father, the ordinance, statue, law and rule of governing his people, and also the moral law, which he agreed to be made under, and was willing to fulfil. Another part of the work proposed to him and enjoined him by his Father, was to suffer the penalty of the law, death; which must be endured, either by the sinner himself, the transgressor of the law, or by his Surety, (Gen. ii. 17,) wherefore it *became* the wise, holy and righteous Being, *for whom and by whom, are all things—to make the Captain of salvation*, his Son, whom he appointed to be the Saviour of men, *perfect through sufferings*, for the satisfaction of law and ustice. Hence Christ says, speaking of laying down his life for the sheep, *This commandment have I received of my Father*, (John x. 18,) and

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hence his sufferings are called *the cup* which his Father had *given* him; not just then put into his hands, for he spake of it long before, as what he was to drink of; but it was what was ordered him in the everlasting covenant. (John xviii. 11; Matt. xx. 22.) And this being the Father's will in the covenant, hence likewise it is that the Father's hand appears in them, as to bruise him and put him to grief, to awake the sword of justice against him, and smite him: not to spare him, but deliver him up by his determinate counsel, into the hands of wicked men, and to death itself. And the covenant having somewhat of the nature of a testament, or of a last will, there was a necessity of the death of the testator to ratify and confirm it; which was to be done by the blood of Christ, called, therefore, the blood of the everlasting covenant. (Heb. ix. 15, 16, 17, and xiii. 20.) Farther, it was the will of the Father, in the covenant, that Christ should hereby make atonement for the sins of the chosen ones, and *to bring in everlasting righteousness*, for the justification of the elect. God the Father in covenant, *called him in righteousness*, or to *righteousness*, to work out a righteousness for his people, commensurate to the demands of law and justice; and this call and proposal he answered and agreed to.

2. On condition of Christ's engaging to do the above work proposed and prescribed to him, the Father promised in the covenant many things; some to him personally, and others to the elect, whom he personated and represented in it. To himself relating to his work were promised assistance, &c. a glory on the nature in which he should do it, the honorable offices he should be invested with in it, and the numerous offspring he should

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have. As the work assigned him was to be done in human nature, which needed qualifications, strength, help and assistance, support, preservation from enemies and encouragement of success: all this was promised him in covenant, as an encouragement to engage in this work. As he was to do and suffer much in his human nature, so it was promised him, that he should have a very great glory conferred on him in that nature; not only that the glory of his Deity should be manifested and displayed, which was hid, especially from many, during his state of humiliation; for which, when he had done his work, he may be thought to pray, pleading a promise made to him; (John xvii. 4, 5,) but there was a glory to be put on his human nature. Hence the prophesies of the Old Testament, which are founded on covenant-engagements, speak as of the sufferings of Christ, so of the glory that should follow, and of Christ's entering through sorrows and sufferings, into his kingdom and glory. And Christ believed and expected that he should be glorious, notwithstanding all his meanness in a state of humiliation. (Isa. xlix. 5; Luke xxiv. 26.) It was particularly promised him, that though he should die and be laid in the grave, yet that he should not lie so long as to see corruption, but be raised again the third day, as he was, and so he had the glory given him, and which he had faith and hope of, (Psalm xvi. 9, 10, 11; 1 Pet. i. 21,)—as also, that he should ascend to heaven, and receive gifts for men, or in man, in human nature; and accordingly he did ascend above all heavens to fill all things, and gave the gifts to men he received, and that in a very extraordinary manner; whereby it appeared he was glorified, as was promised him, because

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the Spirit was not given in such a plentiful manner till Jesus was glorified, exalted at the right hand of God, and made and declared Lord and Christ. (Psalm lxviii. 18; Eph. iv. 8, 9, 10; John vii. 39; Acts ii. 33, 36.) Moreover, it was promised him, that in human nature he should sit at the right hand of God; a glory and honor to which none of the angels were ever admitted, but, in consideration of his obedience, sufferings and death, he was highly exalted, and a name given him above every name; being placed on the right hand of God, angels, authorities and powers being made subject unto him. (Psalm cx. 1; Heb. i. 13; Phil. ii. 7, 8, 9; 1 Pet. iii. 23.) And now he is seen crowned with glory and honor, and will come a second time in his own glory and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels, all according to the covenant-agreement. As an encouragement to Christ to engage in the above work proposed to him in Covenant, it was promised him that he should be invested with, and sustain several honorable offices, which he should execute in human nature: as, that he should be the great Prophet of the church—not only *the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God* to the Jews, but be *for a light of the Gentiles*—which is twice promised, where plain traces of this everlasting covenant are to be seen. (Isa. xlii. 6.) It was also promised, and sworn to by an oath in the covenant, that he should be a Priest; an honor which no man takes to himself, but to which he must be called as was Aaron Likewise, he was to be King of Zion, of saints, over his church and people, and have a kingdom very large, from sea to sea, fro. . the river to the ends of the earth;

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of which government, and its increase, there should be no end; a dispensatory kingdom, besides that of nature and providence. Once more, God has appointed him in covenant to be the judge of quick and dead; and has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he has ordained; and accordingly, he has committed all judgment to him that all men should honor him as they honor the Father. (Acts x. 42, and xvii. 31; John v. 22, 23.) In consequence of fulfilling the condition of the covenant, engaging to do, and doing the work proposed, it was promised to Christ, that he should *see his seed and prolong his days;* (Isa. liii. 10,) that is, that he should have a spiritual offspring, a seed that should serve him, and be accounted to him for a generation; that he should be an everlasting Father to them, and they be his everlasting children; that as the first Adam was the common parent, and federal head of all his posterity, who sinning, conveyed sin and death to them; so the second Adam becomes the Father and federal Head of a spiritual offspring, and conveys grace, righteousness and life unto them. It was promised him that this seed should be numerous, and continue long; yea, that these children should endure forever, and his throne be as the days of heaven; and that these should be his portion, and his inheritnace; not only the elect among the Jews, but those among the Gentiles also; and, therefore, he was bid to *ask* of his Father in covenant, and he would *give him the heathen for his inheritance,* and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; which accordingly he asked, and has received. And he is well pleased with his portion, and says, the lines are fallen

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to him in pleasant places, and he has a goodly heritage. (Isa. ix. 6; Psalm xxii. 30, and lxxxix. 29, 36, and ii. 8, and xvi. 6.) It was promised him, that all persons and things should be put into his hands, to subserve his mediatorial interest, and the good of his spiritual seed, his covenant-people; even all the wicked of the earth, whom he disposes of as he pleases, and rules with a rod of iron. He is given to be a Head over all things to the church; for its preservation and security; and has power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him; and accordingly all things are put into his hand, and all creatures are at his disposal.

There are other promises made by God the Father in covenant, which relate to the elect, the persons for whom Christ was a covenantee, whom he represented in the covenant, and for whose sake he was to do all the work proposed to him, and which he undertook. It was promised, that upon Christ's engaging in and performing the work of redemption, they should be delivered out of that state of misery into which sin had brought them; that they should be redeemed from all their iniquities, original and actual, which should be cast behind God's back, and into the depth of the sea, never to be seen and remembered more to their condemnation; (Psalm cxxx. 8,) that they should be ransomed from the hand of Satan, stronger than they, the prey be taken from the mighty and the lawful captive delivered; (Jer. xxxi. 11; Isa. xlix. 24, 25,) that they should be freed from the law, its curse and condemnation, Christ being made a curse for them, and sin condemned in his flesh; (Rom. viii. 1, 3, 33; Gal. iii. 13,) and that the should be secured

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from hell, wrath, ruin and everlasting destruction which their sins deserved; (Job xxxiii. 24,) that upon the faithful discharge of his office, as a Servant, particularly in bearing the sins of his people, they should be openly justified and acquitted. All their iniquities were to be forgiven for Christ's sake, and their sins and transgressions remembered no more. This is a special and particular article in the covenant, to which all the prophets bear witness. (Jer. xxxi. 34; Acts x. 43.) They were to be openly adopted, and declared the children of God, and dealt with as such; God being their Father, their Portion and inheritance; and they his people, his children and heirs and treated as such by him; as they would be when chastised for their sins, the rod being provided for them in covenant, as well as their inheritance. (Jer xxxii. 38; 2 Cor. vi. 18; Psalm lxxxix. 30, 34; Heb. xii. 7.) They were to be regenerated, their hearts spiritually circumcised to love the Lord, and his fear put into them, and they made willing in the day of his power upon them, to be saved by him, and to serve him. They were to have knowledge of God as their covenant-God and Father; even the least, as well as the greatest, be all taught of God, as his children and so believe in Christ. So that repentance and faith are not terms and conditions of the covenant, but are free grace-gifts granted, and blessings of grace promised in the covenant, and are as sure to the covenant people, as any other blessings whatever. (Acts xi. 18, and v. 31; Eph. ii. 8.) It is another promise in this covenant, that the law of God should be put into their inward parts, and written on their hearts; that they should have a spiritual knowledge of it, and yield a

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constant, ready and cheerful obedience to it. (Jer. xxxi 33; Rom. vii. 22, 25.) It is further promised by the Lord, in this covenant, that whereas they are weak and strengthless, and unable to do anything spiritually good of themselves, that he will put his Spirit within them, who wtll work in them both to will and to do. Another article in this covenant, respecting the chosen and covenant people, is that they shall persevere in grace, in faith and holiness, to the end; this is absolutely promised, and the faithfulness of God is engaged to perform it: *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* (Jer. xxxi. 40 · 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.)

CHAPTER IX.

THE PART OF THE SON IN THE COVENANT.

The part which the Son of God takes, and the place and office he has in the covenant of grace, are next to be considered. Christ has so great a concern in the covenant, that he is said to be the Covenant itself: *I will give thee for a Covenant of the people.* (Isa. xlii. 6, and xlix. 8.) His work which was proposed to him, and he agreed to do, is, as has been observed, the grand condition of the covenant, and he himself is the great blessing of it. He is the Alpha and the Omega, as of the Scriptures. He is the first and the last in it, the sum and substance of it. All the promises are made to him,

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and are all yea and amen in him. He sustains various characters and offices in the covenant. He is the representative-Head of his people in it; and is its Mediator, Surety, Testator and Messenger.

Christ assented to his Father's proposals, accepted them and made open declaration of his readiness and willingness to act according to them, which formally constitute the covenant and compact between them. His consent thereunto is fully expressed in Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8: *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering, and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; in he volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God! yea thy law is within my heart.* That these words were written by David, as personating the Messiah, is certain from the application of them to him by the apostle, in Heb. x. 5—10, according to whom, the time when these words were spoken, was when *he cometh into the world*, that is, at his incarnation. This assent and consent is first more obscurely and figuratively expressed: *Mine ears hast thou opened*, digged or bored; expressive of his great attention, hearkening and listening with great diligence, to what his Father proposed to him; (Isa. l. 4, 5,) and of his ready and cheerful obedience to his Father's will, signified thereby. The phrase seems to be used in allusion to the boring the servant's ear, who cared not to quit his master's house, but was willing to serve him forever. (Exod. xxi. 5, 6.) The Septuagint, and so the apostle render the words, *A body hast thou prepared me;* a part being put for the whole; and which is supposed; for the ear could not be opened, unless a body was prepared; by

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which is meant, not a part, but the whole of the human nature, soul and body; prepared, not only in the purposes and decrees of God, but in the covenant of grace where it had a covenant-subsistance, by the joint-agreement of the divine Persons. For as the Father proposed it to the Son, that he should have such a nature, he agreed to assume it, and, therefore, takes up these words, to show his ready assent to it: *a body hast thou prepared me.* This acceptance of his Father's proposals is more clearly and fully expressed: *Lo, I come to do thy will;* that is, to assume human nature, to lay down his life in it, to suffer death, make atonement for the sins of his people, and obtain their redemption and salvation. His willingness to do all this freely, and without compulsion; he himself, and not another, and immediately, as soon as ever it should be necessary; he declares, with a note of admiration, attention and asseveration; and his heartiness in it is still more fully signified, by saying, *I delight to do thy will.* And it is added: *Yea, thy law is within my heart;* it is in my heart to fulfil it; I am ready to yield a cordial and cheerful obedience to it. Now all this was *written* concerning him *in the volume of the book;* not of the Scriptures in general only, nor of the Pentateuch in particular, the only volume extant in David's time. (Gen. iii. 15.) Nor only of the book of God's purposes, (Psalm cxxxix. 16,) but of the covenant; alluding to the writing, signing and sealing of covenants The covenant at Sinai is called the book of the covenant. (Exod. xxiv. 8.) Now in this volume, or book, as the Father's proposal is there written and contained, so is the Son's assent to and acceptance of it. And to all this, tha the character in which Christ here addresses

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his divine Father, *My God*, is a phrase expressive of covenant relation, and is frequently so used both with regard to Christ and his people. But nothing more fully proves Christ's free and full consent to do the will of his Father, proposed in covenant, than his actual performance. Was it his will that he should take the care and charge of all his elect, and lose none? he has done it. (John xvii. 12.) Was it his will that he should assume human nature? the word has been made flesh, and dwelt among men. (John i. 14.) Was it his will that he should obey the law? he is become the end of the law for righteousness. (Rom. x. 4.) Was it his will that he should suffer death, the penalty of it? he has suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God. (1 Pet. iii. 18.) Was it his will that he should make himself an offering for sin? he has given himself to God, an Offering and a Sacrifice, of a sweet-smelling savor. (Eph. v. 2.) Was it his will that he should redeem his people from all their iniquities? he has obtained an eternal redemption of them. (Heb. ix. 12.)

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CHAPTER X.

CHRIST THE COVENANT-HEAD.

THERE are various characters, relations and offices, which Christ sustains in the covenant of grace; among which, that of a federal Head is one. Christ is often said to be the *Head of the Church;* not of any particular congregation of saints, but of the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, even of all the elect of God, that ever have been, are, or will be in the world. (Eph. i. 22, 23, and v. 23; Col. i. 18.) He is a Head, as a natural head is to a natural body and its members, of the same nature, superior, communicating life, sense and motion to it as well as overlooking and protecting it. He is a Head in a political sense, as a general is the head of his army, and a king is the head of his subjects, (Judg. x. 18, and xi. 11; Hos. i. 11,) and in an economical sense, as a husband is the head of the wife, a father the head of his children, and a master the head of his servants. (Numb. i. 4; Eph. v. 23, 24; Isa. ix. 6; Matt. xxiii. 10.) The headship of Christ in these several senses, chiefly belongs to his Kingly office; but besides these, he is the representative-head of his church or of all the elect of God.

Christ was in election chosen as Head, and his people as members in him, and so they had union to him, and a representative-being in him before the world began. The promises of grace and glory, made to the elect of God in covenant, were made to them, as considered in Christ, their head and representative; for whereas these promises were made before the world

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began, (Tit. i. 2,) they could not be made to them in their own persons, but as personated by Christ, and, therefore, were made to him their head. Hence the promise of life is said to be *in* him, (2 Tim. i. 1,) and indeed, all the promises are yea and amen *in him.* (2 Cor. i. 20.) The apostle having said that *to Abraham and his seed were the promises made*, observes, *he saith not* and *to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ;* who is the head and representative of all his spiritual offspring. Christ in the everlasting covenant engaged, in the name of his people, to obey and suffer in their stead; and accordingly he did both in time, as their Head and Representative. He obeyed the law, and fulfilled all righteousness, not as a single individual of human nature, and for himself, but as the federal Head of his people, as representing them: *That so the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.* (Rom. viii. 4.) In consequence of Christ's covenant-engagements and performances, when he rose from the dead, he rose not a private, but as a public Person, as the head and representative of all those for whom he obeyed and suffered; and, therefore, they are said to be quickened and raised together with him, as they were then also justified in him, when he himself, as their Head and Surety was justified. (Eph. ii. 5, 6; Col. iii. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 16.) Yea, Christ is also gone to heaven, not only as the Forerunner of his people, but as their Head and Representative; he has taken possession of heaven in their name, appears in the presence of God for them, and personates them, as the high-priest did the children of Israel, in the holy of holies; and hence they are said to be made to sit together in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus.* (Eph. ii. 6.)

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CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST THE MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT

ANOTHER relation or office, which Christ bears in the covenant, is that of *Mediator*. Three times in the epistle to the Hebrews is he called the Mediator of the new or better covenant or testament, (chap. viii. 6, ix. 15, xii. 24,) which is the same as the everlasting covenant, so called new in reference to a former administration of it. The apostle Paul asserts that there *is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* (1 Tim. ii. 5.) Both Jews and Gentiles have a notion of a Mediator; the Jews* call the Messiah the Mediator, or middle one; and so Philo the Jew,† speaks of the most ancient Word of God, as μεσος, a middle Person between God and men, not unbegotten as God, nor begotten as man, but the middle of the extremes, one between both. The Persians‡ call their God Mithras, a Mediator; and the Demons, with the heathen seem to be, according to them, mediators betwen the superior gods and men.

1. Christ is the Mediator of the covenant, not in such a sense as Moses, who stood between God and the people of Israel, *to show* them *the word of the Lord*, (Deut. v. 5,) to receive the law, the lively oracles, and deliver them, said to be ordained, or disposed by angels,

* R. Joseph Albo, Ikkarim, Orat. 2. c. 28.
† Quis Rer. Divin. Hæres, p. 509. Vid. ibid. de Cherubim, p. 112.
‡ Plutarch. de Isid. et Osir.

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in the hand of a mediator, supposed to be Moses. (Gal iii. 19.) Christ indeed is the revealer and declarer of his Father's mind and will, and the dispenser of the covenant of grace in the different administrations of it, in the several periods of time; but this more properly belongs to him as the *angel or messenger of the covenant*, as he is called, (Mal. iii. 1,) than the mediator. Christ is a mediator of reconciliation; such an one as interposes between two parties at variance, in order to bring them together, and reconcile them to each other. *A mediator is not of one*, of one party; for where there is but one party there can be no difference, and so no need of a mediator; but *God is one*, one party, the offended party; man is the other, the offending party and Christ is the mediator between them both to bring them together, who are through sin at as great a distance as earth from heaven. He is the antitype of Jacob's ladder, that reaches both and joins them together.

Reconciliation supposes a former state of friendship, a breach of that friendship, and a renewal of it. Man in a state of innocence was in a state of friendship with God, had many high honors and special favors conferred upon him, but being in this honor he abode not long. Sin soon separated friends, and he was driven out of his paradisaical Eden; and appeared to be, as all his posterity are, not only at a distance from God, and alienation from him, but at enmity against him. In this state the elect of God were considered, when Christ undertook in covenant to be the mediator of reconciliation for them; and in this condition he found them, when he came to make actual reconciliation for them: *you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by*

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wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, (Col. i. 21,) and hereby has brought them into an open state of grace and favor with God; into greater nearness to him, and into a more exalted state of friendship with him than what was lost by the fall.

It should be observed, that the elect of God are considered in the covenant of grace as fallen creatures. In the covenant of works there was no mediator. Whilst that covenant remained unbroken, and man continued in a state of integrity, he needed none; he could correspond and converse with God without one. Nor is there any mediator for angels; none was provided for the fallen angels, they were not spared. The good angels needed none having never sinned. Some have thought that Christ is the medium of union of angels with God, and of elect men, chosen in Christ, and considered as unfallen, to which there is no objection, but a mediator of reconciliation and satisfaction, Christ is only to fallen men. And without such a mediator, the purposes of God concerning elect men, the covenant of grace made on their account, the prophecies of the Old Testament and the salvation of men could not have been accomplished; nor the perfections of God, particularly his justice and holiness, glorified in it.

Reconciliation is the principal branch of Christ's office in the covenant as Mediator. Another follows, namely,

His intercession, or advocacy, which proceeds upon reconciliation or satisfaction made: *If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the Propitiation for our sins.* (1 John ii. 1, 2.) And it is his being the Propitiation for sin,

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that is the foundation of his advocacy, or on which is grounded his plea for the remission of it. He is the angel of God's presence, who always appears there for his people, and ever lives to make intercession for them. He is first the Mediator of reconciliation, and then of intercession; as they are reconciled to God by his sufferings and death, they are saved through his interceding life. Christ is the medium of access to God, to the throne of his grace. And he is the medium of acceptance, both of persons and services, which are only accepted in the beloved, and become acceptable through his prevalent mediation and intercession. And he is the medium of the saints' communion and fellowship with God now, as he will be the medium of their glory and happiness to all eternity.

2. The fitness of Christ for his work and office, as the Mediator, is very apparent. As a mediator was necessary, and he must be one of the divine Persons in the Trinity; the Son of God being the middle Person in it, seems the most proper and suitable to preserve the order, name and place of the Persons in it. It does not seem so fitting that the first person should be a Mediator to the second; but rather, as Dr. Godwin expresses it, as the suit of trespass was commenced, and ran in the name of the Father, of the first person for the rest; it seems most agreeable that the reconciliation be made to him by one of the other Persons. And since the second Person bears the name of a Son, it seems most in character that the Son should mediate with the Father. And since it was proper that the Mediator should become the son of man, it seems most suitable that he who was the Son of God should become the Son of

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man. And for the first or third Person to become a Mediator between God and man, does not seem so becoming, as for him who is the second or middle person among them. But the principal fitness of Christ for his office, as Mediator, at least for executing it, lies in the union of the two natures, human and divine, in his one Person; whereby he is the Immanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh; and as he partakes of both natures, he has an interest in, and a concern for both; he is fit to be a mediator between God and man; both to take care of things pertaining to God and his glory, and to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. It was requisite that he should be man, assume human nature into union with his divine Person, even a true body, and a reasonable soul.——(1.) That he might be related to those for whom he was to be a Mediator, that he might be their brother, their near kindsman, and so have an apparent right to redeem them, as the near kinsman, according to the law. (Lev. xxv. 48, 49.)——(2.) That sin might be satisfied for, and reconciliation be made for it, in the same nature which sinned; and whereas, according to the scheme of mediation and salvation by Christ, the same individuals that sinned were not to suffer; it seems requisite and reasonable that an individual of that nature should, in their room and stead, that so it might come as near to what the law required as could be. (Gen. ii. 17.)——(3.) It was proper that the Mediator should be capable of obeying the law, broken by the sin of man. A divine Person could not be subject to the law, and yield obedience to it; and had he assumed the angelic nature, that would not have been capable of obeying all the precepts of the law,

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which are required of men. (Gal. iv. 4; Rom. v. 19.——(4.) And it was meet the Mediator should be man, that he might be capable of suffering death. And furthermore that he might be a merciful, as well as a faithful High-Priest, have a fellow-feeling with his people, and sympathize with them under all their temptations, afflictions and distresses, and succor and relieve them, as their friend and brother. (Heb. ii. 17, 18, and iv. 15.)

It was necessary that he should be holy and righteous, free from all sin original and actual, that he might offer himself without spot to God, take away the sins of men, and be an advocate for them, (Heb. vii. 26, and ix. 14; 1 John iii. 5, and ii. 1,) but it was not enough to be truly man, and an innocent person: he must be more than a man, to be a mediator between God and man: it was requisite, therefore, that he should be God as well as man.——(1.) That he might be able to draw nigh to God, and treat with him about terms of peace, and covenant with him; all which a mere man could not do; and, therefore, it is with wonder said, and as expressive of the arduousness of the task, of the difficulty of the work, and of the necessity of a divine Person to do it: *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?* (Jer. xxx. 21,) to mediate between him and sinful men, to lay his hands on both, and reconcile them together.——(2.) That he might give virtue and value to his obedience and sufferings; for if he had been a mere man, his obedience and righteousness would not have been sufficient to justify men, nor his sufferings and death a proper sacrifice and atonement for sin.

The mediation of Christ thus stated, meets with and

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militates against two errors; one, that he is only a Mediator as to his human nature, and another, that he is so only as to his divine nature. But most certain it is, that there are several acts and works of Christ, as Mediator, in which both natures manifestly appear, and are concerned; not to mention the incarnation itself, or Christ's assumption of human nature, which manifestly implies both. It was the Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, that was made flesh, and dwelt among men. It was he who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with him, who was found in fashion as a man, and took on him the form of a servant. In the act of laying down his life the human nature is passive in it, and is the life laid down; the divine nature, or the divine Person of Christ, is active in it, and laid down his life of himself, he having such a power over his life as man, and that at his disposal, as no mere creature ever had. And both are to be observed in his taking it up again; his human nature, in his body being raised from the dead; his divine nature or person, in raising it up of himself, whereby he was declared to be the Son of God with power. He was put to death in the flesh, in human nature, and quickened in the Spirit, or by his divine nature. The sacrifice of himself was his own act, as Mediator; what was offered up were his soul and body, his whole human nature; this was offered by his eternal Spirit, or divine nature, which gave virtue to it, and made it a proper atoning sacrifice for sin. To observe no more, the redemption and purchase of his people, is a plain proof. The purchase-price, or the price of redemption, is his precious blood, his blood as man; but what gave virtue to that

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blood, and made it a sufficient ransom-price, is, that it was the blood of him who is God as well as man; and, therefore, God is said to purchase the church with his own blood. (Acts xx. 28.)

It was not only requisite and necessary, that the Mediator should be God and man, but that he should be both in one person, or that the two natures should be united in one Person; or, rather, that the human nature should be taken up, united to, and subsist in the Person of the Son of God; for the human nature, as it has no personality of itself, adds none to the Son of God. It is no constituent part of his Person; he was a divine Person, before his assumption of human nature; and what he assumed was not a person, but a nature, and is called a *thing*, *nature*, *seed*. (Luke i. 35; Heb. ii. 16.) Had it been a person, there would be two persons in Christ, and so two mediators, contrary to the express words of Scripture. (1 Tim. ii. 5.) But these two natures being in personal union, the works and actions of either, though distinct and peculiar to each, yet belong to the whole Person, and are predicated of it: and so those of the human nature have virtue and efficacy in them, from the personal union. Hence it may be observed, that Christ is described in one nature, by qualities, works and actions, which belong to him in the other, which divines call a communication of idioms, or properties. Thus the Lord of glory is said to be crucified; God is said to purchase the church with his blood; and the Son of man is said to be in heaven, while he was here on earth. (1 Cor. ii. 8; Acts xx. 28; John iii. 13.) The advantage of this personal union is, that the divine nature has an influence upon, and gives virtue and dig-

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nity to whatsoever is done or suffered in the human nature; which is of the utmost importance in the mediation of Christ.

3. That Christ came to be the Mediator of the covenant, even the Mediator of reconciliation in it, was owing originally to a thought in the heart of God, the offended Party; whose thoughts were *thoughts of peace and not of evil*, towards offending man. This affair began with God the Father: *All things are of God*, that is, the Father, *Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.* And God not only set him up, but *set* him *forth* in his eternal purposes and decrees, to be the *propitiation for sin*, to make reconciliation and satisfaction for it, (Rom. v. 25,) and declared him in prophecy to be the Prince of peace, and the Man that should appear in human nature, and make peace and reconciliation between him and men.

Christ is an everlasting Mediator. He was Mediator from everlasting, and acted as such throughout the whole old testament dispensation, and still continues. He has an unchangeable priesthood; his blood always speaks peace and pardon, and he ever lives to make intercession. But when his mediatorial kingdom shall be completed, there will be no need of him, either as a Mediator of reconciliation or intercession, at least not in the manner he has been, and now is; for sin being wholly removed from the saints, they may have access to God and he may communicate unto them, without the intervention of a Mediator; as is the case of the holy angels, although Christ may be the medium of the glory and happiness of his people to all eternity.

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CHAPTER XII.

CHRIST THE SURETY OF THE COVENANT.

The suretyship of Christ is a branch of his mediatorial office. One way in which Christ has acted the part of a Mediator between God and men, is by engaging on their behalf, to do and suffer whatever the law and justice of God required, to make satisfaction for their sins. The Greek word for *surety*, εγγυος, is used but once throughout the whole New Testament, (Heb. vii. 22.) where Christ is said to be made, or become *the Surety of a better testament*, or covenant.

In what sense Christ is the Surety of the Covenant.

1. He is not the Surety for his Father, to his people, engaging that the promises made by him in covenant shall be fulfilled; which is the Socinian theory of Christ's suretyship.* For though the promises were made to Christ, and are Yea and Amen in him; and many of them, such as respect him, were fulfilled in him, and by him, as the minister of the circumcision, (Gal iii. 16; 2 Cor. i. 20; Rom. xv. 8,) yet, such is the faithfulnes of God that has promised, that there need be no surety for him. His faithfulness is sufficient. He is God who cannot lie nor deny himself. And if his word were not enough, he has joined his oath, so that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, the heirs of promise might have strong consolation, in believ-

* Crellius et Schlichtingius in Heb. vii. 22.

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ing in the fulfillment of every promise made. (Heb. vi. 18.) Besides, though Christ is equal with his Father, and has all the perfections of Deity in him, yet he is not greater than he; and, with reverence to him be it said, he cannot give a greater security than the word and oath of God. And it is with an ill grace these theorists advance such a notion; since they make Christ to be but a mere man.

2. Christ is a surety, not precisely like what in jurisprudence is called a *fidejussor*, or one jointly engaged with a debtor, for the payment of a debt; or so bound for another, as that that other remains under obligation, the obligation of the surety being only an accession to the principal obligation. The principal debtor is then still left under his debt, and under obligation to pay it, if able. It is first to be demanded of him, and should his surety desert his suretyship, he remains holden. But in Christ's suretyship he is not a mere accessory to the obligation of his people. He and they are not engaged in one joint-bond for payment; but he has taken their whole debt upon himself—has paid it off, and entirely discharged it alone. Nor was there any condition made in his suretyship-engagements for his people, that they should pay if able; for God the Father to whom Christ became a Surety, knew, and he himself, the Surety, knew full well that they were not and never would be able to pay. For having failed in their obedience to God, all after acts of obedience, though ever so perfect, could not make amends, or satisfy for that disobedience, since to those God has a prior right; and their failure in obedience, brings upon them a debt of punishment, which is everlasting, and *ad infinitum;*

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and if left on them, would be ever paying, and never paid. (Luke vii. 41, 42; Matt. xviii. 24, 25, and v. 26, and xxv. 46.) Nor could Christ desert his suretyship and withdraw himself; for though he voluntarily engaged in this work, yet when he had undertaken it he could not relinquish it. He is immutable.

3. Christ is a Surety as what is called an *expromissor;* one who promises out and out, absolutely engages to pay another's debt, takes another's obligation, and transfers it to himself, and by this act dissolves the former obligation, and enters into a new one, called *novation;* so that the obligation no longer lies on the principal debtor. Now this kind of suretyship being most similar, and coming nearest to Christ's suretyship, is made use of to express and explain it; though they do not completely correspond; for the civil law neither describes nor admits such a surety among men as Christ is: who so substituted himself in the room and stead of sinners, as to suffer punishment in soul and body for them.

Christ's Engagements as a Surety.

He engaged to pay the debts of his people, and satisfy for the wrong and injury done by them. This may be illustrated by the instance of the apostle Paul engaging for Onesimus; -which is thus expressed: *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on my account; I Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.* (Philem. *v.* 18, 19.) Sin is a wrong and injury done to divine justice, and to the holy law of God broken by it; which Christ undertook to satisfy. Sins are debts, (Matt. vi. 12, compared with Luke xi. 4,) though not proper ones, for then they might be committed with

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impunity, since it is right and commendable to pay debts, but in an improper sense, as debts oblige to payment, so sins to punishment. These debts, or sins, are infinite objectively, as they are contracted and committed against an infinite being, and require punishment of a creature *ad infinitum;* and, therefore, not to be paid off, or answered by a finite creature; but Christ being an infinite Person, as God was able to pay off those debts, and answer for those sins, and engaged to do, and has done it.

There is a twofold debt paid by Christ, as the Surety of his people: the one a debt of obedience to the law of God; which he engaged to do when he said, *Lo I come to do thy will; thy law is within my heart:* and the other a debt of punishment, incurred through failure of obedience—the curse of the law he has endured, that is, the penalty of it, death—and by paying both these debts, the whole righteousness of the law is fulfilled in his people, considered in him their Head and Surety. Now let it be observed, that these debts are not like pecuniary debts, though there is an allusion to such, and the language is borrowed from them; but criminal; a wrong and injury done, as supposed in the case of Onesimus; and are of such a nature as deserve and require punishment in body and soul, being transgressions of the righteous law of God. And God is to be considered, not merely as a creditor, but as the Judge of the whole earth, who will do right, and who will by no means clear the guilty, without a satisfaction to his justice; and yet there is a mixture of grace, mercy and goodness in God, by admitting a Surety to obey, suffer and die, in the room and stead of his people, which he was not obliged unto; nor

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does the law give the least hint of its allowance. Nor do the civil laws of men admit of such a thing as that an innocent person should suffer death in the room of one who is guilty, even though he consents to and desires it; because no man has a power over his own life, to dispose of it at pleasure. But God, who can dispense with his own law, if he pleases, has thought fit to explain it, and put a construction on it in favor of his people, where it is not express; and to allow of a commutation of persons. This is owing to his sovereign grace and mercy; and is not at all inconsistent with his justice, since Christ fully consented to all this, who is the Prince of life, and had power over his own life, as man, to lay it down and take it up again. And justice is fully satisfied, by the obedience and death of Christ, and the law magnified and made honorable, and more so than it could have been by all the obedience and sufferings of angels and men put together.

2. Christ as a Surety engaged to bring all the elect safe to glory. This may be illustrated by Judah's suretyship for Benjamin; thus expressed to his father: *I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever.* (Gen. xliii. 9.) And thus Christ became a Surety to his divine Father for his beloved Benjamins, the chosen of God, and precious. Christ engaged to *bring* his people to his Father; *to bring Jacob again to him, and to restore the preserved of Israel,* (Isa. xlix. 5, 6,) to recover the lost sheep, to ransom them out of the hands of him who was stronger than they; to redeem them from all iniquity, and from the law, its curse and condemnation, save them with an

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everlasting salvation, and bring them safe to his Father in heaven. At his death all the elect were gathered together in one Head, even in him, that he might present them in the body of his flesh, through death, holy, unblameable and unreproveable in the sight of God; as he now does in heaven, where he appears in the presence of God for them, and they are set down in heavenly places in him, as their Head and Surety; and as he will at the last day, when he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, the mediatorial kingdom, the kingdom of priests, complete and perfect, as he received them. And having first presented them to himself, as a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, he will present them faultless before the presence of his Father's glory, with exceeding joy; and will be so far from bearing any blame, having so fully discharged his suretyship-engagements, that he will appear without sin unto salvation; even without sin imputed, without the wrong done by his people put on his account, all being fully answered for according to agreement.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHRIST THE TESTATOR OF THE COVENANT.

1. The covenant of grace bears the name, and has the nature of a testament. It is often called the new and better testament, as administered under the Gospel-dispensation, (Matt. xxvi. 28; Heb. vii. 22, and ix. 15,) in distinction from the former. It is called a testament, in allusion to the last will and testament of men, and

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because it is the voluntary will of God himself, and not of another. All its articles are of his free good will and pleasure: as, that he will be the covenant-God of his people; that they shall be his sons and daughters; that they shall be his heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ; that they shall enjoy all the blessings of grace, redemption, pardon, justification, regeneration, perseverence in grace and glory; for he hath bequeathed, in this will, both grace and glory to his people. (Psalm lxxxiv. 11; Luke xii. 32.) In a will a man disposes of what is his own; and not of what is another's, otherwise his will is void, and such bequests void. All the blessings of goodness, whether of nature, providence or grace, are the Lord's own, and he has a sovereign right to dispose of them as he pleases, and to give them to whomsoever he will: *Is it not lawful for me*, says the testator of the covenant, *to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?* (Matt. xx. 15.) This will or testament of Jehovah, is ancient. It was made in eternity, and is called an everlasting covenant, or testament; not only because it always continues, and will never become null and void, but because it is from everlasting. It is, indeed, sometimes called a new testament, not because newly made, but because newly published and declared, at least in a more clear and express manner; a new and fresh copy of it has been delivered to the heirs of promise. It is unalterable: *Though it be but a man's covenant*, or testament, *yet if it be confirmed* by his own hand writing and seal, and especially by his death, *no man disannulleth or addeth thereunto.* (Gal. iii. 15.) The covenant of grace is ordered in all things, and sure; this testament or will, is founded upon

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the immutability of the divine counsel; so that the heirs of promise, the legatees in it, may have strong consolation, and be fully assured of enjoying their legacies in it; which are the sure mercies of David, of David's Son and Antitype. Testaments, or wills, are generally sealed as well as signed. The seals of God's will or testament are not the ordinances. Circumcision was no seal of the covenant of grace; it was a seal to Abraham, and to him only, that he should be the father of believeing Gentiles; and that the same righteousness of faith should come upon them, which came upon him, when in uncircumcision. Nor is baptism, which is falsely said to come in its place, nor the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. But the seals are the Holy Spirit of God, and the blood of Christ. And yet the holy Spirit is not such a seal that it makes the covenant or testament surer in itself, only it assures the Lord's people of their interest in it, by witnessing it to their spirits, by being in them, the earnest of the inheritance bequeathed them, and by sealing them unto the day of redemption. Properly speaking, the blood of Christ is the only seal of his testament, by which it is ratified and confirmed; and therefore called the blood of the covenant, and the blood of the new testament. (Zech. ix. 11; Matt. xxvi. 28; Heb. xiii 20.) To all wills there are usually witnesses. Now as God swears by himself, because he could swear by no greater; so because no other and better witnesses could be had, to witness this will made in eternity, God himself, or the three divine Persons, became witnesses to it, the three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. (1 John v. 7.) Or we may choose to conceive of it in this manner: that as

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the Father, the first Person, takes the lead in all things in nature and in grace, so in the covenant of grace, or in his testament he may be considered as the maker of the will or testament, and the Son and Spirit as witnesses to it. This will, or testament, is registered in the sacred writings, from thence the probate of it is to be taken. The public notaries, or amanuenses who have copied it under a divine direction, are the prophets and apostles; and hence the writings of the one are called the Old Testament, and the writings of the other the New Testament, the latter being the more clear, full and correct copy.

2. The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, may be considered as testator of the covenant of grace, as it is a will or testament, and which is plainly suggested in Heb. ix. 15—17. Christ as God has an equal right to dispose of all things with his divine Father, as all that the Father has are his; particularly all the blessings of grace and of glory. He is over all God blessed forever, and all things are of him and owe their being to him; yea, all things are delivered by the Father to him as mediator. Nothing was given in covenant, or disposed of in the will and testament of God, but with respect to the death of Christ. Whatever is given in this will, is given to Christ first, to be disposed of by him, so that he is the executor as well as the testator of it.

3. The death of Christ is necessary to put this will in force, that it may be executed according to the design of its maker; *for where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator; for a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no*

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strength at all, whilst the testator liveth. (Heb. ix. 16, 17.) The first testament was dedicated, ratified and confirmed in a typical way, as these were types of Christ in his bloodshed and death, (Heb. ix. 19—22,) yet the new testament is only, really and properly ratified and confirmed by the death of Christ itself. And whereas the Father and the Spirit were jointly concerned with Christ in making this will or testament, it was not necessary that they should die, nor could they, since they never assumed a nature capable of dying. It was only necessary that one of the testators should assume a nature capable of death, and to die, in order to give force to this will. With men, legacies are not payable, nor estates bequeathed enjoyed, until the testator dies; but such was the certainty of Christ's death, and such its virtue and efficiency, that it reaches backward to the beginning of the world. Wherefore the Old Testament-saints not only received the promise of eternal inheritance, but enjoyed it before the death of Christ.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CONCERN THE SPIRIT OF GOD HAS IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

HAVING considered the parts which the Father and the Son have taken in the covenant, the part of the holy Spirit properly follows.

The third person, the Spirit, gave his approbation and assent to every article in the covenant.—1. In the

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economy of which each person took his part; and that of the Spirit is sanctification; which makes meet for the enjoyment of complete and eternal salvation; hence called *the sanctification of the Spirit*, (2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2,) and this clearly shows that the Spirit approved of, and assented to the whole scheme of salvation, in general. In the mission of Christ the Spirit joined: *Now the Lord God and his Spirit, hath sent me*, (Isa. xlviii. 16,) which is a plain proof that he approved and assented. The Spirit of God approved of and assented to all the promises in the covenant, and hence he is called *the holy Spirit of promise*. (Eph. i. 13.) Indeed he himself is the great promise of the covenant; promised both to Christ the head, and to his members. (Matt. xii. 18; Isa. xli. 1, and xliiv. 3; Gal iii. 14.) He is concerned in the application of every promise to the elect, and he it is who keeps up their faith and hope, as to the grand promise of eternal life; so that they, *through the Spirt, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith*. (John xiv. 26; Prov. xxv. 11.)

2. There are many things which the holy Spirit himself undertook and engaged; and nothing more strongly proves this than his doing them; for had he not agreed to do them, they would not have been done by him.

He formed the human nature of Christ. Every individual of human nature is, indeed, made by him: *The Spirit of God hath made me*, says Elihu, (Job. xxxiii. 4,) but the individual of Christ's human nature, was *fearfully and wonderfully made* by him, as David personating him, says he was *in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth* in the womb of the Virgin according to the model in the book of God's purposes

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and decrees; it was produced by the power of the Highest, the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, without the instrumentality of man; and so was free from the pollution of sin, propagated by ordinary and natural generation, and, therefore, called the *holy thing*, born of the Virgin. (Psalm cxxxix. 14, 15, 16; Luke i. 35.) The Spirit of God filled the same human nature with his gifts and graces without measure, which are the oil of gladness he anointed him with above his fellows, and thereby fitted and qualified him as man, for the discharge of his office as Mediator. (Isa. xi. 1, 2, 3, and xlii. 1, and lxi. 1.) He descended upon him as a dove at his baptism, assisted him as man, in the ministry of the Gospel, whereby he spake as never man did, and with an authority the Scribes and Pharisees did not; and in the performance of miracles; for he cast out devils, as he himself says, by *the Spirit of God*. (Matt. xii. 28.)

The prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New were endowed with power from on high, with his extraordinary gifts, and on ordinary ministers of the word, in all succeeding generations he bestows gifts and grace suitable to their office.

He is a Spirit *of conviction:* convincing of sin, bringing persons to loath it, and to have a godly sorrow for it, which works repentance unto salvation. And *of righteousness;* of the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before God; and of the excellency and suitableness of the righteousnes of Christ. And *of judgment;* at which all must appear. He is a Spirit *of regeneration* and *renovation*. Men must be born again, and they that are born of God, even of the Spirit of God, are renewed by him in the Spirit of their minds.

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Under the character of a *Comforter*, he is often spoken of, and promised by Christ. *He is a Sanctifier.* If any are sanctified, it is by the Spirit of God; sanctification is his work, and, therefore, called *the sanctification of the Spirit.* It is the Spirit that begins, and carries on, and finishes the work of grace and holiness upon the hearts of God's elect. And all this the Spirit of God does as he engaged and undertook to do, in the everlasting covenant; and, therefore, he is said to come, being sent to do these things; not without his will and consent, but according to his voluntary engagements in covenant without which he could not be sent by the Father and the Son, he being equal to them.

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THE WORD AND WORKS OF GOD.

PART III.

THE EXTERNAL WORKS OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

THE CREATION IN GENERAL.

The external acts and works of God are his goings forth out of himself, in the exercise of his power and goodness in the works of creation, providence, redemption and grace. These works of God, without himself, in time, agree with the acts of his mind within himself, in eternity, and are no other than his eternal purposes and decrees carried into execution; for *he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.* (Eph. i 11.)

I. *What Creation Is.*

It sometimes signifies only the natural production of creatures into being, in the ordinary way by generation and propagation. The birth of persons, in the common course of nature, is called their creation, and God is represented as their creator. (Ezek. xxi. 30, and xxviii. 14; Eccles. xii. 1.) Sometimes it designs acts of providence, in bringing about affairs of moment and importance in the world; as when it is said, *I form the light and create darkness;* which is explained by what follows,

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I make peace and create evil. This means prosperous and adverse dispensations of providence; which are the Lord's doings, and are according to his sovereign will and pleasure. (Isa. lv. 7.) So the renewing of the face of the earth, and the reproduction of herbs, plants, &c. in the returning spring of the year, is called a creation. (Psalm civ. 30.) And the renewing of the world, in the end of time, though its substance will remain, is called creating new heavens and a new earth. (Isa. lxv. 17.) Sometimes it intends the doings of something unusual, extraordinary and wonderful; such as the earth opening its mouth, and swallowing up the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness, (Numb. xvi. 30,) the wonderful protection of the church of God, (Isa. iv. 5,) and particularly the amazing incarnation of the Son of God. (Jer. xxxi. 22.)

Creation may be distinguished into mediate and immediate. Mediate creation is the production of beings, by the power of God, out of pre-existent matter, which of itself was not disposed to produce them; so God is said to create great whales and other fishes, which, at his command, the waters brought forth abundantly. And he created man, male and female, and yet man, as to his body, was made of the dust of the earth, and the woman out of the rib of man. Indeed, all that was created on the last five days of the creation, was made by the all-commanding power and will of God, out of matter which before existed, though indisposed of itself for such a production. Immediate creation, and which is properly creation, is the production out of nothing, or the bringing of a nonentity into being, as was the work of the first day, the creating the heavens and the earth.

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the unformed chaos, and the light commanded to arise upon it. And these are the original of all things; so that all things ultimately are made out of nothing which is the voice of divine revelation, and which our faith is directed to receive: *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear*, (Heb. xi. 3,) but of things unseen, and, indeed, which had no existence; for God, by his all-commanding word and power, *called things that are not as though they were*, (Rom. iv. 17,) that is, called and commanded by his mighty power, nonentities into being. And this is what is meant by a creation of things out of nothing; and so the word ברא, used for the making of the heavens and the earth in the beginning, signifies, as Aben Ezra and Kinchi observe.

Indeed it cannot be otherwise conceived of but that the world was made out of nothing; for, if nothing existed from eternity but God, or if nothing existed before the world was but himself, by which his eternity is described, and which he claims as peculiar to himself, (Psalm xc. ii; Isa. xliii. 10,) and if the world was made by him, it must have been made out of nothing, since, besides himself, there was nothing existing out of which it could be made. To say it was made out of pre-existent matter, is to beg the question; besides, that pre-existent matter must be made by him; for he has created all things. (Rev. iv. 11.) Besides, there are some creatures, and those the most noble as angels and the souls of men, which are immaterial, and, therefore, not made out of matter, and consequently are made out of nothing. They are brought from nonentity into being, by the almighty power of God; and

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if these and others, why not all things, even matter itself? As for that old and trite maxim, so much in the mouths of the ancient philosophers,* as well as modern reasoners, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, out of nothing nothing is made; this only holds true of finite nature, finite beings second causes; by them out of nothing, nothing can be made; but not of infinite nature, of the infinite Being, the first Cause, who is a God of infinite perfection and power. Plato† owns that God is the Cause, or Author of those things, which before were not in being, or created all things out of nothing.

II. *The Object of Creation.*

Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure, or by thy will, *they are and were created.* (Rev. iv. 11.) These all things are comprehended by Moses under the name of the heavens and the earth, (Gen. i. 1,) and more fully expressed by the apostles in their address to God, who is described by them as having *made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is*, (Acts iv. 24,) and still more explicitly by the angel, who swore by the living God *who created heaven and the things that therein are; and the earth, and the things that therein are; and the sea, and the things which are therein.* (Rev. x. 6.)

1. The heavens and all therein are often represented as made and created by God, and are said to be the work of his fingers and of his hands; being curiously as well

* So Democritus, Diogenes, Epicurus, vid. Laert. l. 9, 10. in Vita corum.——nullam rem e nihilo gigni; nil posse creari, de nihilo—— Lucretius, l. 1. so Persii Satyr. 3. v. 84. erit aliquid quod aut ex nihilo oriatur, aut in nihilum subito occidat, quis hoc physicus dixit unquam? Cicero de Divinatione, l. 3. c. 37.

† Sophista, p. 185.

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as powerfully wrought by him. (Psalm viii. 3, and xix. 1, and cii. 25.) They are spoken of in the plural number; there are and there must be certainly three, for we read of a third heaven, which is explained as of *paradise*. (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.) This is, as the heaven of heavens, the superior heaven, the most excellent, the habitation of God, where his glorious presence is, where he keeps his court, and which is indeed his throne. (Isa. lxv. 15, and lxvi. 1.) The angels dwelt there and are therefore, called the angels of heaven; and there glorified saints will be in soul and body to all eternity. Now that is a place made and created by God, and as such cannot contain him, though his glory is greatly manifested in it. (1 Kings viii. 27.) Besides the angels, who being finite creatures, must have an *ubi* somewhere to be in, and who are said to ascend unto, and descend from thence, (John i. 51,) there are bodies which require space and place, as those of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, translated thither; the human nature of Christ, which has ascended there and will be retained until his second coming; there are the bodies of those who rose at the time of his resurrection; and there the bodies of the saints will be to all eternity. This is expressly called a *place* by Christ, is distinguished as the place of the blessed, from that of the damned, (John xiv. 2, 3; Luke xvi. 26,) is sometimes described by a house, a city, a country, kingdom and an inheritance; and is particuary called a *city whose builder and maker is God*. (Heb. xi. 10.) All things in it are created by him; he the uncreated Being excepted. The angels are his creatures: *He makes his angels spirits*. (Psalm civ. 5.) There is another heaven, lower than the former, and may be

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called the *second*, which bears the name of the starry heaven because the sun, moon and stars are placed in it: *Look towards heaven and tell the stars*, (Gen. xv. 5; Isa. xl. 26; Job. xxii. 12,) and embraces immeasurable regions of space which our eyes cannot reach. This and all in it were created by God: he made the sun to rule by day, and the moon to rule by night; and he made the stars also. There is another heaven lower than both the former, which may be called the aerial heaven; and this wide expanse of firmament of heaven is the handy-work of God, with all things in it; not only the fowls that fly in it, but all the meteors gendered there: as rain, hail, snow, thunder and lightening.

2. The earth was first made without form—not without *any*, but without the beautiful one in which it quickly appeared. And as this was made by God so were all things in it; the grass, the herbs, the plants and trees upon it; the metals and minerals in the bowels of it, gold, silver, brass and iron; all the beasts of the field and "the cattle on a thousand hills."

3. When God cleaved a hollow in the earth, he gathered into it the waters he drained off, and gave those waters, thus gathered, the name of seas. *The sea is his, and he made it*, (Psalm xcv. 5,) and all in it—the marine plants and all the fishes which swim in it, great and small, innumerable. (Psalm civ. 25, 26.) Now these, the heavens, earth, and sea and all that are in them, make up the world which God has created, and which is but one; for though we read of worlds, God has made by his Son, and which are framed by the word of God, (Heb. i. 2, and xi. 3,) yet these may have respect only to the distinction of the upper, middle and lower

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world. The numerous worlds some Jewish writers speak of, are mere fables; and that the planets are so many worlds like our earth, and that the fixed stars are so many suns to systems of worlds, are the conjectures of modern astronomers, in which there is no certainty. Revelation gives no account of them, and we have no concern with them; and be there as many as are imagined, of this we may be assured, they were all created by God.

III. *Beginning of Creation.*

The next inquiry is, when did creation begin? or when did God begin to create? This was not in eternity, but in time; an *eternal creature*, or a creature in eternity, is the greatest absurdity imaginable. It was in the beginning of time, or when time first began, as it did, when a creature was first made, that God made all things. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*, (Gen. i. 1,) *And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth*, &c. (Heb. i. 10.) These were the first that were created, and with these time begun. Some philosophers, the head of whom is Aristotle, have asserted the eternity of the world. But it is without reason; and it is abundantly refuted by Scripture; and, therefore, cannot be received by those who believe its divine authority. To say that the world, or matter, was coeternal with God, is to make that itself God; for eternity is a perfection peculiar to God; and where one perfection is, all are. What is eternal, is infinite and unbounded; and if the world is eternal, it is infinite; and then there must be two infinites, which is an absurdity. Besides if eternal, it must necessarily exist; or

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exist by necessity of nature; and so be self-existent, and consequently God.

The world does not appear to be of very great antiquity—not as yet, six thousand years old according to the Scriptural account. According to the Greek version, the age of the world is carried fourteen or fifteen hundred years higher; but the Hebrew text is most reliable. As to the accounts of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Chinese, which make the origin of their kingdoms and states many thousands of years higher still; they are only vain boasts and fabulous relations, which have no foun dation in true history. The inventions of art and science, embracing even the necessities of life; as of agriculture, mechanic arts and letters, appear to have been within the time the Scripture assigns for the creation. Nor does any other genuine history reach to so remote a period as do the Scriptures, and, therefore, we may safely conclude that the origin of the world there given is true. For if the world had been eternal, or of so early a date as some kingdoms pretend to, some record or relic of those ancient times would have been, in some way or other, transmitted to posterity.

IV. *The Manner and Order of the Creation.*

It was done at once by the mighty power of God, by his all-commanding will and word, *He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast.* (Psalm xxxiii. 9.) He gave the word, and every creature started into being in a moment, for though God took six days for the creation to make his works the more observable, and that they might be distinctly considered, and gradually become the object of contemplation and wonder; yet

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the work of every day, and every part and particular work in each day, were accomplished in a moment, without any motion and change, without any labor and fatigue, by an Almighty *fiat*. Thus on the first day, by the word of the Lord, the heavens and the earth were at once made, and light was called into being. On the *second* day the firmament of heaven, the great expanse, was formed in the same manner, to divide the waters above it, gathered up and formed into clouds, from those that were under it upon the surface of the earth. On the *third* day, in one moment of that day, God ordered the waters under the heavens to be gathered into one place called the sea, and leave the land dry which he called earth; and in another moment of that day he commanded the earth to bring forth grass, herbs and trees, and they sprung up at once. On the *fourth* day he made the sun, moon and stars in an instant, and directed their several uses. On the *fifth* day, in one moment of it, he bid the water bring forth fowls, and in another moment of it created great whales, and the numerous fishes of the sea. And on the *sixth* day, in one moment of it, he ordered the earth to bring forth living creatures, beasts, and cattle, wild and tame; and in another moment of the same day he created man after his image, his soul immaterial out of nothing, his body out of the dust of the earth; and in another moment, on the same day, created the woman out of the rib of man, immediately infusing into her a rational soul as into man, since both were made after the image of God. Thus God proceeded in the creation of things in the visible world, from things less perfect, to those more perfect, from inanimate creatures to animate, and from

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irrational to rational. And when he had finished his works he overlooked them and pronounced them all *very good.*

V. *The End of the Creation.*

1. The ultimate end is the glory of God: *The Lord hath made,* in every sense, *all things for himself;* that is, for his glory. (Prov. xvi. 4.) His glory is displayed in all, the heavens declare it, and the earth is full of it, even the glory of all the divine perfections; *for the invisible things of him,* his nature, perfections and attributes, *from the creation of the world,* or by the works of creation, *are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead* All the perfections of deity are manifested, particularly his infinite and almighty power. (Rom. i. 20.)——2. The subordinate end is the good of man. The earth is made to be inhabited by man, and all the creatures on it are put in subjection to him, and are for his use and service, as well as all that grows upon its surface or that is contained in its bowels. (Isa. xlv. 12. 18; Psalm viii. 6—8.) The celestial bodies, the sun, moon and stars, and all the influences of the heavens, are for his benefit. (Gen. i. 14—18; Hos. ii. 21, 22.) The world, and all things were particularly made for the sake of God's chosen people, who in the several ages of time are brought forth and appear. And they have the best title to *the world,* even the present world, Christ being theirs, whose is the world and the fulness of it, (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23; Psalm xxiv. 1,) as well as to the new heavens and the new earth, as the present will be when refined and purified, the second Adam's world. Indeed

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the angels of heaven are created for their use and service; they are all *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who are heirs of salvation.* (Heb. i 14.) Wherefore upon the whole it becomes us to glorify and worship God our creator, to fear and stand in awe of him, and to put our trust and confidence in him, both for things temporal and spiritual.

CHAPTER II.

THE CREATION OF ANGELS.

THOUGH the creation of angels is not expressly mentioned in the account of the creation by Moses, yet it is implied, for "the heavens" include all that are in them. And Moses, in the closing account of creation, observes, *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.* Now of the hosts of heaven, the angels are the principal part. They are expressly called the heavenly host, and the armies of heaven, (Dan. iv. 35; Luke ii. 13,) and, therefore, must have been created within the six days of the creation; though it is not certain whether on the first, second, third or fourth day. But most probably it was on the first, on which the heavens were created, and then the earth; so that the angels might be created with the heavens, their habitation. Accordingly they might be present at the forming and founding of the earth, on the same day, and sing on that occasion. (Job. xxxviii. 7.) Though they

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were created very early, some time within the creation of the six days; since some of them fell before man did, and one of the apostate angels was concerned in the seduction of our first parents, and was the instrument of their fall and ruin, quickly after their creation; yet they were not created before the world, as some have fancied, for there was nothing before the world but the supreme Being, the Creator of all things. *Before the world was*, is a phrase expressive of eternity, and that is peculiar to God, and whose eternity is expressed by the same phrase: *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world; even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.* (Psalm xc. 2.) Besides, though angels have not bodies, and so are not in place circumscriptively; yet, as they are creatures, they must have an *ubi*, a somewhere, in which they are definitively. Now where was there an *ubi*, a somewhere in which they could exist before the heavens and the earth were made? it is most reasonable, therefore, to conclude, that as God prepared a habitation for all the living creatures before he made them; as the sea for the fishes; the expanse, or air for the fowls, and the earth for men and beasts; so he made the heavens first, and then the angels to dwell in them. And these were all made at once and together; and not as the souls or spirits of men, which are made as are their bodies, one by one, for they are created, not without them but in them by God, *who formeth the spirit of man within him.* (Zech. xii. 1.) But the angelic spirits were all made together; for all those morning stars, the sons of God, where present and shouted at the foundation of the earth; and *all* the hosts of heaven, were made by the breath of

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God, when the heavens were created by his word. (Job xxxviii. 7; Psalm xxxiii. 6.)

Their numbers are many; there was a multitude at the birth of Christ, (Luke ii. 13,) and our Lord speaks of twelve Legions and more, that he could have had by asking them of his Father. (Matt. xxvi. 53.) According to the vision in Dan. vii. 10, thousand thousands of these ministering spirits, ministered to the Ancient of days; which number is greatly exceeded in the vision John saw, (Rev. v. 11,) where those in worship with the living creatures and elders are said to be ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, and may well be called an innumerable company. (Heb. xii. 22.) Yet the passages referred to only speak of good angels. The evil angels are many also. We read of a Legion of them in one man. (Mark v. 9,) Perhaps those who fell may be as many as those who stood; and if so, how great must be the number of them all together, at their creation.

1. Of their proper names, though there are many in the Apocryphal and Jewish writings, yet in the sacred Scriptures we find but few, perhaps not more than one, and that is Gabriel, the name of an angel sent with dispatches to Daniel, Zacharias, and to the Virgin Mary. (Dan. viii. 16, and ix. 21; Luke i. 19, 26.) As to Michael, the Archangel, he seems to be no other than Christ the prince of Angels, and Head of all principality and power; who is as God, like unto him, as his name signifies, even equal with him. The names, titles and epithets of angels, are chiefly taken from their nature, qualities, appearances and offices. Some that are ascribed do not seem to belong to them, as *cherubim* and *seraphim*,

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which are names and characters of ministers of the word, and the *Watchers* in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, thought to be angels by many, are more probably the divine Persons in the Godhead, the same with the holy Ones and the most High. (Dan. iv. 17, 24.) Elohim is their principal name, translated *gods*, (Psalm xcvii. 7,) and interpreted of an angel. (Heb. i. 6.) The same word is translated angels, in Psalm viii. 5, and which is justified by the apostle. (Heb. ii. 9.) This name is given to angels because they have been sent with messages from God, in his name, to men; have spoken in his name, and been his representatives; and for a like reason they have the names of *thrones*, *dominions*, *principalities* and *powers*. (Col. i. 16.) This is not on account of any hierarchy, or order of government, established among themselves, which does not appear; but rather because of the dignity to which they are advanced, being princes in the court of heaven; and because of that power and authority which, under God, and by his direction, they exercise over nations and persons on earth. And if the text in Job xxxviii. 7, is to be understood as referring to angels, it furnishes us with other names and titles, as *morning-stars* and *sons of God*. They may be called *morning-stars*, from the brightness, splendor and glory of their nature, and from the clearness of their light, knowledge and understanding. In this sense they are *angels of light;* into one of which Satan, who was once a bright morning-star, sometimes transforms himself. And they may be said to be *sons of God;* not by grace and adoption, as saints are; much less by divine generation, as Christ is: *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?* (Heb. i. 5,) but by

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creation, being made in the image of God, which consists in wisdom and holiness; and being his favorites, and beloved of him. They sometimes have the names of *men* given them; because they have appeared in human form. Such were two of those who appeared like men to Abraham, and afterwards to Lot; and two others seen by the women at Christ's sepulchre. (Gen. xviii. 2, and xix. 1, 5, 8; Luke xxiv. 4.) The more common name given to these celestial spirits, is that of *angels;* the word for which in the Hebrew language, and which is used in the Old Testament, signifies *messengers*, and comes from a root, preserved in the Ethiopic dialect, which signifies to *send*, because these spirits have been often sent with messages and dispatches to the children of men. Our word *angels* comes from a Greek word,* which signifies the same.

2. The nature of angels is expressed by the word *spirits*. They are real personal beings, that subsist of themselves. There was a sect among the Jews, the Sadducees, who said there was *neither angel nor spirit*, (Acts xxiii. 8,) and our modern Sadducees are not less absurd, who assert that good and evil angels are no other than good and evil thoughts. It is difficult to form any idea of a spirit. We rather know what they are not than what they are. *A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have*, says Christ. (Luke xxiv. 39.) A legion of spirits could never have a place in one man; nor could they penetrate and pass through bodies, through doors bolted and barred, as these angelic beings have, if corporeal. It is no objection that they have sometimes appeared as men, for they have only seemed

* αγγελλω nuntio, nuntium affero, Scapula.

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so, or have assumed bodies only for a time, and then laid them aside. They are *invisible*, and are among the invisible things created by the Son of God, as before observed; and though it was a notion that obtained among the Jews in Christ's time, and does to some extent among us, that a spirit may be seen; it is a vulgar error. (Luke xxiv. 37.) Indeed, when angels have assumed a human form they may be seen, as they were by Abraham and Lot; and so when they appeared in the forms of chariots and horses of fire, around Elisha, they were seen by his servant, when his eyes were opened; but then these bodies seen were not their own; and these appearances were different from what they really were in themselves. Being incorporeal and immaterial, they are *immortal;* they do not consist of parts, of matter capable of being disunited or dissolved, and hence the saints in the resurrection will be like them in this respect, that *neither can they die any more.* (Luke xx. 36.) God, who only has immortality originally and of himself, has conferred immortality on the angelic spirits; and though he can annihilate them, he will not; for even the evil spirits that have rebelled against him, though they die a moral and an eternal death, yet their beings, their substances, continue and perish not.

3. The more especial qualities and excellencies of angels are *three*—holiness, wisdom or knowledge, and power. They are called *holy angels*, (Mark viii. 38,) and so they all were created, not indeed so holy as God: for *there is none holy as the Lord.* (1 Sam. ii. 2.) Nor were they created immutably holy, but were capable of sinning, as some of them left to the mutability

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of their own free will, departed from their *first estate.* But others stood in their integrity, and are become impeccable; not owing to the power of their free-will, and their better use of it, but to the electing grace of God, and the confirming grace of Christ, who is the Head of all principality and power. (1 Tim. v. 21; Col. ii. 10.) These now, as they persist in their obedience, are perfect in it; hence the petition Christ directed his disciples to: *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.* (Matt. vi. 10.) They are subject to the same laws and rules of morality and righteousness that men are, excepting such as are unsuitable to their nature; as some duties belonging to the fourth, fifth, seventh eighth and tenth commands of the decalogue. They *do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word.* (Psalm ciii. 20.)

Angels are very wise. It is a high strain of compliment in the woman of Tekoah to David: *My Lord is wise according to the wisdom of an angel of God; to know all things that are in the earth,* (2 Sam. xiv. 20,) yet it shows the general opinion entertained of the wisdom of angels; though in comparison with the all-wise and only-wise God, they are by him chargeable *with folly.* (Job iv. 18.) There are many things which they know not, unless by marks and signs, in a conjectural way, or by a particular revalation: as the thoughts of men's hearts, which to know peculiarly belongs to God, the searcher of the hearts, and trier of the reins of the children of men. Nor do they know future contingencies, or what shall be hereafter, unless such as necessarily and ordinarily follow from natural causes. or are revealed unto them of God. Of the day

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and hour of the end of the world, and the last judgment, as no man knoweth, so neither do the angels of heaven. (Matt. xxiv. 36; Rev. i. 1.) Power is another excellency of the angels; they are called *mighty* angels, and are said to *excel in strength*. (2 Thess. i. 7; Psalm ciii. 20.) Their strength is great, and their power and authority under God very large, yet finite and limited.

4. In their office and employment with respect to God their work is to praise him, to celebrate the glory of his perfections: *Praise ye him, all his angels*, (Psalm cxlviii. 2,) and to worship him with his saints. We find them sometimes joining with men, with the living creatures and elders in John's vision, in ascribing blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power and might unto God; and the same, in the same company to the Lamb that was slain. (Rev. v. 11, 12, and vii. 11, 12.) And their work also lies in keeping the commandments of God, and doing his will in heaven and in earth. These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth, to do his will and work in it; they wait his orders, and immediately go forth and execute them. (Zech. vi. 4, 5.)

With respect to Christ; on him they are said to ascend and descend, as they did on Jacob's ladder, a type of him. (Gen. xxviii. 12; John i. 51.) They attended at the incarnation; one informed the Virgin of her conception of him, removed her doubts about it, and explained to her the mystery of it; another encouraged Joseph to take her to wife, and a third published the news of his birth to the shepherds; and who was presently joined with a multitude of them, who in chorus celebrated the glory of God, displayed therein. When

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God brought him, his first-begotten, into the world, and manifested him to it in human nature, he gave orders to all the angelic host, to do him homage and worship, saying, *Let all the angels of God worship him.* (Luke i. 30—35; Matt. i. 19, 20; Luke ii. 10—14; Heb. i. 6.) They had the care and charge of him in his state of humiliation. They were solicitous for the perservation of his life in his infancy. When Herod sought to take it away, an angel gave notice to Joseph, in a dream. When he had fasted forty days and nights in the wilderness, these same excellent creatures came and ministered food unto him, (Matt. iv. 11,) and one of them attended him in his agony in the garden, and strengthened and comforted him. (Luke xxii. 43.) They were present at his resurrection, and rolled away the stone from the sepulchre; (Matt. xxviii. 2; Luke xxiv. 4, 6, 23,) they accompanied him at his ascention to heaven, by them he will be attended at his second coming. (2 Thess. i. 7; Luke ix. 26.)

To the saints they are sent as ministering spirits; and though in some instances they may have a concern with others, yet that is chiefly in the behalf of the church and people of God, who are more especially their charge and care, both in temporal and spiritual affairs. In temporal matters they have extensive agency. There is a special providence toward the elect. As soon as born they are under particular watch and care, which is what the apostle means when he says that *God separated him from his mother's womb*, (Gal. i. 15,) and which providence may be thought to be chiefly executed by the ministry of angels; for though it is not certain, which yet some Scriptures countenance, (Matt.

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xviii. 10; Acts xii. 15,) that every one has his guardian angel, yet doubtless saints from their birth are under the care of angels.——(2.) Again, angels may be charged with providing food for them when in want, as they ministered food to Christ in the wilderness; and prepared manna, called angels' food, because prepared by them in the air, and let down by them from thence, for the Israelites during their forty years' travels; and as an angel dressed food for the prophet Elijah, and called upon him to arise and eat. (Matt. iv. 11; Psalm lxxviii. 25; 1 Kings xix. 5—8.)——(3.) Keeping off diseases from them, and healing them according to the promise, *He shall deliver thee from the noisome pestilence—neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling; for he shall give his angels charge over thee*, &c. (Psalm xci. 3, 7, 10, 11.) The healing virtue of the pool of Bethesda was owing to the agitation of its waters by an angel, (John v. 4.)—— (4.) Directing and protecting in journies, and at other times; thus Abraham, when he sent his servant to Mesopotamia to take a wife for his son Isaac, assured him that God would send an angel before him to direct and prosper him, which the servant found to be true, and blessed God for it. (Gen. xxiv. 7, 27, 48.) So Jacob, as he was travelling, was met by the angels of God, who divided themselves into two hosts for his guard. (Gen. xxxii. 1, 2.) And even all who fear the Lord have such a guard about them, for the *angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.* (Psalm xxxiv. 7.)—— (5.) Keeping from dangers, and helping out of them: when Lot and his family were in danger of being destroyed in Sodom, the angels laid hold on their hands and brought them forth. (Gen. xix. 15.) Shadrach,

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Meshech, Abednego, Daniel, Peter and other apostles were delivered by angels. (Dan. iii. 28, and vi. 22; Acts v. 19, 20, and xii. 7, 10.)

With respect to things spiritual.——(1.) Angels have been employed in revealing the mind and will of God to men. They attended at mount Sinai, when the law was given; and it is said to be ordained by angels, and to be given by the disposition of angels, and even to be the word spoken by angels. (Deut. xxxii. 2; Acts vii. 59; Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2.) And an angel published the Gospel, and brought the good news of the incarnation of Christ, and salvation by him. (Luke ii. 10, 11.) An angel made known to Daniel the time of the Mesiah's coming; as well as many other things relating to the state of the church and people of God. (Dan. viii. 16—19, and ix. 21—27, and xii. 5—13.) And an angel was sent to signify to the apostle John the things that should come to pass in his time, and in all ages to the end of the world. (Rev. i. 1.)——(2.) Though the work of conversion is the sole work of God, yet as he makes use of instruments as ministers of the word, why may he not be thought to make use of angels? they may suggest that to the minds of men which may be awakening to them, and may improve a conviction by a providence, which may issue in conversions of sinners; and there is joy in heaven, and in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance. (Luke xv. 7, 10.)——(3.) They are useful in comforting the saints when in distress; as they strengthened and comforted Christ in his human nature when in an agony, so they comfort his members, as

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Daniel, when in great terror, and the apostle Paul in a tempest. (Dan ix. 23, and x. 11, 12; Acts xxvii. 23, 24,) and as when in temporal, so when in spiritual distresses; for if evil angels are capable of suggesting terrible and uncomfortable things, and of filling the mind with blasphemous thoughts, and frightful apprehensions; good angels are surely capable of suggesting comfortable things, and what may relieve souls distressed with unbelief, doubts and fears, and the temptations of Satan.——(4.) They are exceedingly useful to saints in their dying moments to whom they whisper comfortable things against the fears of death; they keep off the fiends of hell from disturbing and distressing; and they watch the moment when soul and body are parted, and carry their souls to heaven; as they carried the soul of Lazarus into Abraham's bosom. (Luke xvi. 22.) And thus Elijah was carried to heaven, soul and body, in a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which were no other than angels which appeared in such a form. (2 Kings ii. 11.)——(5.) Angels, as they will attend Christ at his second coming, when the dead in Christ shall rise first; so they will be made use of by him, to gather the risen saints from the four quarters of the world, and bring them to him; to gather the wheat into his garner, and to take the tares, and even all things out of his kingdom that offend, and burn them. (Matt. xiii. 40, 41, and xxiv. 31.)

From the whole it appears, that angels are creatures, and so not to be worshipped; which idolatry was in the apostles' time condemned, (Col. ii. 18,) and the angels themselves refuse and forbid it. (Rev. xix. 10, and xxii. 8, 9.) Yet they are to be loved, valued and

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esteemed by the saints, partly on account of the excellency of their nature, and partly because of their kind and friendly offices; and care should be taken to give them no offence, in public or private; (1 Cor. xi. 10,) for the saints are highly honored by having such excellent spirits to wait upon them, minister unto them, and be guards about them; and it is no small part of their Gospel privileges, for which they should be thankful, that they are come to an innumerable company of angels. (Heb. i. 14, and xii. 22.)

CHAPTER III.

THE CREATION OF MAN.

MAN was made last of all the creatures, being the chief and master-piece of the whole creation on earth, whom God had principally and first in view in making the world, and all things in it; according to that known rule, that what is first in intention is last in execution. God proceeded in his works as artificers do, from a less perfect to a more perfect work. Man is a compendium of the creation, and therefore is sometimes called a microcosm, a little world, the world in miniature. Something of the vegetable, animal and rational worlds meet in him. Spiritual and corporeal substance, or spirit and matter are joined together in him. Heaven and earth centre in him—he is the bond that connects them both together. All creatures were made for his

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sake, to possess, enjoy and have the dominion over, and therefore was he made last of all.

Man was made on the *sixth* and last day of the creation, and not before; nor were there any of the same species made before Adam, who is therefore called *the first man Adam.* There have been some called Præadamites, who have held that there were men before Adam. So the Zabians held; and speak of one that was his master;* and in the last century one Peirerius wrote a book in Latin, in favor of the same notion; which has been repeatedly refuted by learned men. It is certain that sin entered into the world, and death by sin, by one man, even the first man Adam; from whom death first commenced, and from whom it has reigned ever since. (Rom. v. 12, 14.) It is certain that Adam was the first man, as he is called; not only with respect to Christ, the second Adam; but because he was the first of the human race, and the common parent of mankind; and Eve, the mother of all living. The apostle Paul says, that God *has made of one blood,* that is of the blood of one man, *all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth,* (Acts xvii 26,) and this he said in the presence of the wise philosophers at Athens, who, though they objected to the new and strange deities they supposed he introduced, yet said not one word against that account of the origin of mankind. But what puts this out of all question with those who believe the divine revelation, is, that it is expressly said, that before Adam was formed, *there was not a man to till the ground.* (Gen. ii. 5.)

Man was made after, and upon a consultation held

* Sepher Cosri, par. I. s. 61.

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concerning his creation: *Let us make man*, (Gen. i. 26,) which is an address, not to second causes, not to the elements, nor to the earth; for God could, if he would, have commanded the earth to have brought man forth at once, as he commanded it to bring forth grass, herbs, trees and living creatures of all sorts, and not have consulted with it. Nor is it an address to angels, who were never of God's privy council; nor was man made after their image, he being corporeal, they incorporeal. But the address was made by Jehovah the Father, and the consultation was held by him, with the other two divine Persons in the Deity, the Son and Spirit.

I. *God the Author of Man's Creation.*

So God created man. (Gen. i. 27.) Not man himself; a creature cannot create. But God, who is the Creator of the ends of the earth, was the Creator of the first man, and of all since; for we are all his offspring, and therefore are exhorted to *remember* our *Creator*, (Eccles. xii. 1,) or *Creators;* for so it is in the original text, referring to the three Persons in the Trinity. So we read of God our *Makers* in various passages of Scripture. (Job xxxv. 10; Psalm cxlix. 2; Isa. liv. 5.) Wherefore the three divine Persons should be remembered as Creators, and as such feared, worshipped and adored. It is worthy of remark that the word *created* is used three times in one verse, where the creation of man is only spoken of. (Gen. i. 27.)

II. *The Constituent and Essential Parts of Man Created by God.*

These are two, body and soul. They appear at his first formation. The one was made out of the dust the

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other was breathed into him; and so at his dissolution, the one returns to the dust from whence it was, and the other to God that gave it. And, indeed, death is only the dissolution, or dis-union of these two parts: *the body without the spirit is dead;* the one dies, the other does not.

1. The body is a most *wonderful* structure, so that it may well be said, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* (Psalm cxxxix. 14.) The erect posture of the body remarkably distinguishes man from the brutes, who look downward to the earth. Man is thus fitted and directed to look upward to the heavens, to contemplate them, and the glory of God displayed therein, and to worship and adore him. In the Greek language man has his name ανθρωπος,* from turning and looking upwards.

The body of man is very *fair* and beautiful; for if the children of man, or of Adam, are fair, as is suggested, (Psalm xlv. 2,) then most certainly Adam himself was created fair and beautiful; and some think he had the name of Adam given him from his beauty; and the root of the word, in the Ethiopic† language, signifies to be fair and beautiful. And though external beauty is a vain thing to gaze at, and for men to pride themselves with in this their fallen state, when God can easily by a disease cause their beauty to consume away as a moth; yet it is a property and quality in the composition of man at first not to be overlooked, since it greatly exceeds what may be observed in the rest of the creatures.

* Vide Platonem in Cratylo.

† Vide Ludolph. Hist. Ethiop. l. 1. c. 15.

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The body of man was also originally made *immortal;* not that it was so of itself, and in its own nature, being made of the elements of the earth, and so reducible to the same again; and was supported, even in the state of innocence, with corruptible food; but God, who only has immortality, conferred it on the body of man; so that if he had never sinned, his body would not have been mortal, or have died. It is no objection to this that it was supported with food; for God could have supported it with or without food for ever. As God could support the body of Adam with food, even when it was become mortal, through sin, for the space of nine hundred years and more; he could have supported it for the space of nine thousand, and so onward, had it been his pleasure; and there can be no difficulty in conceiving that he could have supported it in an unfallen state, when it had the gift of immortality, in the same way for ever. And it is most clear from the word of God, that death did not arise from a necessity of nature; but from Sin: *Sin entered into the world, and death by sin,* and, *through the offence of one, many be dead,* and, *the wages of sin is death;* yea, it is expressly said, *the body is dead because of sin,* (Rom. v. 12, 15, and vi. 23, and viii. 10,) and, indeed, to what purpore was that threatening given out, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,* (Gen. ii. 17,) if man of necessity must have died, whether he had sinned or no? as say the Pellagians and Socinians;* and which, if they could, they would maintain, in order to avoid the force of the argument in favor of original sin. But now, though this body was

* Socinus de Statu primi hominis ante lapsum, s. 8, 9, 10. et de Servatore, par. 3. c. 8. et par. 4. c. 6.

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so wonderfully and beautifully formed and gifted with immortality, yet it was made out of the dust of the earth, (Gen. ii. 7,) hence man is said to be made out of the clay, and the bodies of men to be like bodies of clay; and to have their foundation in the dust. (Job iv. 18, and xiii. 12, and xxxiii. 6; Isa. lxiv. 8.) Hence some think that Adam had his name from *adamah*, earth, out of which he was formed, red earth, as Josephus* calls it; as in Latin he is called *homo*, from *humus*, the ground. And this is a humbling consideration to proud man, and especially in the sight of God, when compared with him; and still more, as this clay of his is now, through sin, become frail, brittle and mortal; and his dust, sinful dust and ashes. (Gen. xviii. 27.) And it may serve to take down the haughtiness and pride of some who vaunt over their fellow-creatures, and boast of their blood, and of their families, when all are made out of one mass.

2. The soul is the other part of man created by God; which is a *substance*, or subsistance. It is not an accident, or quality, inherent in a subject; but is capable of subsisting by itself. It cannot be a mere quality, or accident, because that is not properly created, at least by itself, but is concreated, or created with the subjects in which it is; whereas the Spirit of man is formed or created of God within him. (Zech. xii. 1.) It is an inhabitant of the body, dwells in it, as in a tabernacle, and removes from it at death, and thereafter exists in a separate state. It is not a corporeal but a *spiritual* substance; not a body, as Tertulian† and others have thought; but a

* Antiq. l. 1. c. 1. s. 2.

† De Resurrectione Carnis, c. 17.

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spirit, as it is often called in Scripture. (Eccles. xii. 7; Matt. xxvi. 41; Acts. vii. 59.) And the souls of men are called the spirits of all flesh, to distinguish them from angelic spirits, which are not sorrounded with flesh. (Numb. xvi. 22.) The soul is immediately breathed from God, as was Adam's soul, and in it chiefly consists the image of God in man, and, therefore, it must be a spirit, as he is, though in a finite proportion, a credited spirit. It is also *immaterial;* and so is *immortal.* The soul of Adam was most certainly created of God, immediately, and breathed into him; and the same may be believed of the soul of Eve; for it cannot be thought that that was contained in, and educed out of the rib, from which her body was made; but that when that was made, God breathed into her the breath of life, as he did into Adam; and there is no reason why the souls of all men should not be made or created, in like manner.

Some have been, and are of opinion, that the souls of men are *ex traduce*, as Tertullian; or generated by and derived from their parents, with their bodies. But against this it may be observed, that Christ was made in all things like unto us, having a true body and a reasonable soul; which could not have been generated by and derived from his parents. He had no father as man, and his mother being a sinful woman, it would have been infected and defiled with the contagion of sin, the corruption of nature; whereas he was holy and harmless, without spot and blemish. Moreover, if souls are by natural generation from their immediate parents, they must be derived either from their bodies, or from their bodies and souls, or from their souls only. Not from

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their bodies, for then they would be corporeal. Not from both bodies and souls; for then they would be partly corporeal, and partly incorporeal, which they are not. Not from their souls only, for as an angel is not generated by an angel, so not a soul by a soul. Besides, if the souls of men are derived from the souls of parents, it is either from a part of them, or from the whole. Not from a part, for then the soul would be partible and divisible, as matter is, and so not immaterial. And as not a part, so neither can their whole souls be thought to be communicated to them, for then they would have none, and perish—to such absurdities is this notion reducible. Again, what is immaterial, as the soul, can never be educed out of matter. And if the soul may be corrupted, then it is not immortal. The doctrine of the soul's immortality becomes indefensible by this notion; for if this be admitted, the other must be relinquished.* But what puts this matter out of all doubt is, the distinction the apostle makes between the *fathers of our flesh* and the *Father of spirits*. (Heb. xii. 9.) Nor is it an objection of any moment, to the soul being of the immediate creation of God, that then a man does not generate a man. For it may be replied, that he may be said to generate a man, though strictly speaking he only generates a part of him; as when one man kills another, he is truly said to kill a man, though he only kills his body. Moreover, as in death, the whole man may be said to die, because death is a dissolution of the whole, though each part remains; so the whole man may be said to be generated, because in

* Nam de mortalibus non potest quicquam nisi mortale generari, Lactant. de Opificio Dei. c. 19.

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generation there is an union and conjunction of the parts; though one part is not generated, yet because of the union of the parts, the whole is said to be so. Some, however, yield to this objection in order to avoid difficulty attending the doctrine of original sin, and the manner of its propagation, which they think is more easily accounted for, by supposing the soul derived from parents by natural generation, and so corrupted. But though this is a difficulty not easily to be resolved, how the soul, coming immediately from God, is corrupted with original sin; it is better to let this difficulty lie unresolved, than to give up so certain a truth, and of so much importance, as is the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which, as has been seen, must be given up if this notion is received. But there are ways of clearing this difficulty, without the expense of such an important truth.

The souls of men were not made in eternity, but in time. The pre-existence of all human souls before the world is a notion held by Plato, among the heathen, and espoused by Origen, among Christians. But if souls were created before the world, then they are eternal; whereas there was nothing before the world but God, to whom eternity only belongs. (Psalm xc. 2.) Nor were souls created together, as were angels; but they are created one by one, when their bodies are prepared to receive them. They are not created without the body, and then put into it; but they are formed in it: *Who formeth the spirit of man within him.* (Zech. xii. 1.) But how it is united, and what is the bond of that union, we must be content to be ignorant of; as well as of the particular place of its abode, whether diffused through

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the whole body, as some think, or having an apartment in the brain or other part of the body.

III. *The Difference of Sex.*

Man and woman—not created together, though on the same day. The male was created first, and out of him the female, as the apostle says, *Adam was first formed, then Eve.* (1 Tim. ii. 13.) Nor were they made out of the same matter, at least not as in the same form; their souls, indeed, were equally made out of nothing, out of no pre-existent matter, but their bodies differently The body of Adam was formed out of the dust of the earth, and the body of Eve out of a rib of Adam, though both originally dust and clay, to which they both returned. The woman was very significantly made out of man's rib; not out of the upper part of man, lest she should be thought to have a superiority over him; nor out of the lower part of man, lest she should be despised and trampled upon; but from a rib to signify that she should be by his side, a companion, and from a part near his heart, and under his arm, to show that she should be the object of his love and affection, and be always under his care and protection, and thus being *flesh of his flesh*, it became him to nourish and cherish her as his own flesh. Man is a social creature, and therefore, God in his wisdom thought it not proper that he should be alone, but provided an help-meet for him, to be a partner and companion with him in civil and religious life; and in this difference of sex were they created for the propagation of their species, to the end of the world. There were but one male and one female, at first created, who were joined in marriage by the Lord himself, to teach

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that but one man and one woman are to be joined together in lawful wedlock. These two, male and female, first created, were made after the same image; for the word *man* includes both man and woman; and Adam was a name common to them both in their creation, when said to be made after the image of God. (Gen. i. 26, 27, and v. 1, 2.) Now God *made man*, that is, both man and woman, *upright; but they*, Adam and Eve, *sought out many inventions*, sinful ones, and so lost their righteousnes

IV. *The Image of God in which Man was Created.*

God said let us make man in our image, and after our likeness——so God created man in his own image. Whether image and likeness are to be distinguished, as by Maimonides,* the one respecting the substantial form of man, his soul; the other certain accidents and qualities belonging to him; or whether they signify the same is not very material. The latter seems probable; since in Gen. i. 27, where *image* is mentioned, *likeness* is omitted; and, on the contrary, in Gen. v. 1, the word *likeness* is used, and *image* omitted. Now though it is only said of man, that he is made after the image and likeness of God, yet he is not the only creature so made. Angels are like to God, and bear a resemblance to him, being spirits, immaterial, immortal and invisible, and righteous and holy in their nature, and sometimes called Elohim; yet the image of God in man differs in some particulars, as that part of it especially, which lies in his body, and in his connection with and dominion over the creatures. He is not in such sense the image of God,

* Moreh Nevochim, par 1. c. 1.

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as Jesus Christ the Son of God is, who is the image of the invisible God, yea, the express image of his Father's Person, having the same divine nature and perfections he has; but though there was in man some likeness and resemblance of some of the perfections of God; yet these perfections are not really in him, except some faint shadows, at least not in the manner and proportion they are in God, in whom they are infinite, in man finite. And though the renewed and spiritual image of God in regenerate persons; which is of a higher and more excellent kind than the natural image of God in Adam, is called a partaking of the *divine nature*, (2 Pet. i. 4,) yet is not to be understood as if any partook of the nature and essence of God, and the perfections of it; only that that is wrought in and impressed on them, which bears some resemblance to the divine nature.

The seat of the image of God in man, is the whole man, both body and soul; wherefore God is said to create *man* in his image; not the soul only, nor the body only; but the whole man. (Gen. i. 27, and v. 1.) Even as the whole man, soul and body, is the seat of the new and spiritual image of God in regeneration and sanctification—*The very God of peace sanctify you wholly;* which the apostle immediately explains of their whole *spirit and soul and body*, being *preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;* when and at the resurrection of the dead, the saints will most fully appear to *bear the image of the heavenly One.* (1 Thess. v. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 49.)

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CHAPTER IV.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

The next external work of God is *Providence;* by which all the creatures God has made are preserved, governed, guided and directed. The word itself is never used of the divine Being in Scripture; yet the thing itself, is fully declared and clearly expressed. Plato is said* to have been the first who made mention of the providence of God in so many words, as he often did;† and the Stoic and other heathen Philosophers have written and spoken well of divine providence. It is once used in Scripture, of the civil administration of the Roman governor, Felix, by Tertullus the orator, when he pleaded before him against the apostle Paul. He compliments Felix on the *great quietness* the Jews enjoyed under his government, and *the very worthy deeds done unto* their *nation* by his *providence.* (Acts xxiv. 3.) And the word is much more applicable to the administration of the great Governor whose is the kingdom of the whole world.

Providence must be considered as distinct from prævidence, prævision, prescience, foresight, foreknowledge and predestination; which all respect some act in the divine mind in eternity; and are no other than the eternal purposes and decrees of God, and may be called eternal providence, virtual providence, providence in purpose. But providence in time, which may be called

* Vid. Laert. l. 3. in Vita Platonis.

† In Timæo et Phædro. et alibi.

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actual providence, is the execution of whatsoever God has foreknown and determined: *Who worketh all things after the council of his will.* (Eph. i. 11.) The eternal will of God is the rule of his conduct in providence, and according to which he proceeds. The wise man says, *There is a time to every purpose under the heaven;* whatever is done under the heavens in time, there was a purpose for in eternity; and for the execution of that purpose a time was fixed; and at such time it is brought about by the providence of God; who *makes everything beautiful in his time.* (Eccles. iii. 1, 11.) Purpose and providence exactly answer to each other; the one is the fulfilment of the other: *Surely as I have thought saith the Lord, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.* (Isa. xiv. 24.)

The providence of God is not only expressed in Scripture by his sustaining, upholding and preserving all things; and by his government of the world, and the execution of his purposes; but by his looking down upon the earth and its inhabitants, observing their ways, and dealing with them according to them: *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men,* &c. (Psalm xiv. 2, and xxxiii. 13, 14.) The providence of God may be argued from, and illustrated by the senses which he imparts to men, for their good, preservation and safety; particularly those of hearing and seeing. He has placed the eyes and the ears in the head of the human body, to see and listen to what may be to the advantage or disadvantage of the members of the body; hence the Psalmist reasons, *He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?*

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The words *provide* and *providing*, are used in reference to masters of families who are to *provide things honest in the sight of all men*, and *if any provide not for his own he is worse than an infidel.* (Rom. xii. 17; 1 Tim. v. 8.) This may give us an idea of the providence of God; in that branch of it particularly, which concerns the provisions which he, as the great Master of his family, throughout the whole universe, makes for it, even from the greatest to the least: *The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season; thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing*, (Psalm cxlv. 15, 16,) even the very ravens and their young are provided for by him: *Who provideth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry unto God?* (Job xxxviii. 41; Luke xii. 24.) It was an instance of great ingratitude and unbelief in the Israelites, that after many tokens of divine goodness to them, they questioned the power of God to take care of them; saying, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?——Can he give bread also?——Can he provide flesh for his people?* Yes, he could and did for six hundred thousand Israelites, besides women and children; and he can and does provide food for all creatures, rational and irrational; and he can and does provide for men, what is necessary for them, when in the greatest extremity. From God's providing a sacrifice in the room of Isaac, when just going to be slain on mount Moriah, it became a proverbial expression in after times, *In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen; or, the Lord will appear, or, will provide* and grant supplies, and deliver out of difficulties. (Gen. xxii. 8, 14.) From the provision which God makes for all his creatures, as the great Master of

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the family, Providence, which with the heathen was reckoned as a deity, is represented like a good house wife or mistress of a family, administering to the whole universe, and was pictured like a grave elderly matron;* and this is one of the titles of the goddess Minerva.†

The providenee of God is expressed by his care of his creatures: *Doth God take care of oxen?* (1 Cor. ix. 9.) He does, and even of creatures inferior to them; and much more then of those who are superior even of all rational creatures; and especially of those who believe; who, therefore, are encouraged to be *casting all* their *care upon him, for he careth for them.* (1 Pet. v. 7.) It is particularly said of the land of Canaan, that it was a *land which the Lord careth for;* from one end of the year to the other, (Dieut. xi. 12,) and is true of the whole world. Now God's sustentation of the world, his government of it, the view and notice he takes of it, the provision he makes for all creatures in it, and his care of and concern for them; this is providence.

I. *Proof of a Divine Providence.*

1. This appears from the light of nature; for as by that it may be known that there is a God who has created all things; so it is as clear that there is a providence that superintends, orders and disposes all things. Hence the heathen, even the most barbarous,‡ held to a providence. All the sects of the philosophers owned it, except one, the Epicureans, and that from a foolish notion that was unworthy of God, affected his happiness, and

* Vid. Chartarium de Imag. Deorum, p. 8, 9.
† Pausan. Phocica. sive l. 10. p. 623.
‡ Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 31.

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interrupted his peace and quiet. Pythagoras* asserted, that there is a kindred between God and men; and that God exercises a providence over us, and it is affirmed by the Stoics,† that the world is inhabited by the mind and providence of God. Seneca wrote a book on providence, in which he says,‡ providence presides over all, and God is in the midst of us. Menedemus, the philosopher, was an advocate for the doctrine.§ Chrysippus wrote on the same subject also.‖ They are the words of Cicero,¶ that by the providence of God, the world, and all the parts of it, were both constituted at the beginning, and administered by it at all times; and the apostle Paul, in a discourse before the philosophers at Athens, concerning God and his providence, produces a passage from Aratus, one of their own poets, in proof of the same: *We are also his offspring.* (Acts. xvii. 28.) Even God's sustentation of irrational creatures, and the provision he makes for them, prove a providence; wherefore Job, (chap. xii. 7—10,) sends his friends to them to learn this: *Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee,* &c.

2. Divine providence may be concluded from the Being of God; the same arguments that prove the one prove the other; if there is a God, there is a providence; and if there is a providence, there is a God. They mutually prove each other. As he is a fool that says there is no God, he is equally a fool that says there is no providence. And those in all ages who have denied a provi-

* Laert. in Vita Pythagor

† Laert. l. 7. in Vita Zenonis. Arrian. Epictet. l. 2. c. 14.

‡ De Providentia, c. 1.

§ Tertullian. Apolog. c. 18.

‖ A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 6. c. 1. Laert. l. 7 in Vita Zeno.

¶ De Natura Deorum, l. 2.

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dence, have been looked upon as atheists. Hence Cicero* observed of Epicurus, that though he made use of the word God in his philosophy, that he might not offend the Athenians, yet in reality removed him from it. And the same writer† thus reasons, If it is granted there is a God, it must be owned, that the administration of the world is by his counsel; and again, those who allow there is a God, must confess that he does something, and something famous and excellent; and nothing is more excellent than the administration of the world; and, therefore, it must be by his counsel. And to me, says Lucilius,‡ he that does nothing, (as such Epicurus makes God,) seems entirely not to be, to have no being—so closely connected are God and his providence, according to the reasoning of this wise heathen. The oracle of Apollo, at Miletus, calls providence the first-born of God.§

3. As the Being of God may be proved from the creation of the world, so may his providence. For if the world was created by him, it must be upheld by him. The same power that was requisite to create, is necessary to uphold it; and, therefore, it may be observed that creation and conservation, which is one branch of providence, are closely joined together. (Col. i. 16, 17; Nehem. ix. 6; Heb. i. 2, 3.)

4. The perfections of God, and their display, make a providence necessary—particularly his power, wisdom and goodness. Since God has created the world, had he

* Epicurus re to lit, oratione relinquit Deos, ibid. l. 1. in fine.
† De Natura Deorum, l. 2.
‡ In Cicero ibid
§ Apud Lactant. l. 7. c. 13.

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not supported it, but left it to chance and fortune, where would have been the greatness and glory of his power? To make a world of creatures, and then neglect them, and take no care of them, would not indicate his goodness! Whereas, the whole earth is full of it; and he is good to all his creatures; and his tender mercies are over all his works.

5. It may be concluded from the worship of God; to which this is a powerful inducement and the ground of. The being of God is the object of worship; and his providence is the basis of it. Without this there would be no fear of God, no reverence for him, no adoration of him. The two main branches of worship are prayer and praise; but if God has no regard to his creatures, and they receive nothing from him, nor have an expectation of anything, for what have they to pray to him? or for what to praise him? And how are they accountable to him? Hence Cicero,* could say, "There are some philosophers, (meaning the Epicureans) who suppose that God takes no care at all of human affairs; but, says he, if this is true, what piety can there be? what sanctity? what religion?" Wherefore they are the libertines of the age, who in any period, as the followers of Epicurus, deny the providence of God. And this they do, that they may have the reins loose on their own necks, and be under no restraint, but at liberty to indulge the gratification of every sensual lust. Such were those of that cast among the Jews, who said, *The Lord hath forsaken the earth; and the Lord seeth not;* and, therefore, we may do as we please.

6. The settled and constant order of things, from the

* De Natura Deorum, l. 1.

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beginning of the world clearly evince a divine Providence. The ordinances of the heavens, of the sun, moon and stars,* have never departed from their stated and fixed order and appointment; nor the covenant of the day and of the night ever been broken. (Jer. xxxi. 35, and xxxiii. 20.) And this course has constantly continued almost six thousand years. Can this be thought to be the effect of chance, and not of an all-wise, all-powerful and all disposing Providence.

7. The many blessings of goodness, the daily benefits and favors, which are continually bestowed by God on his creatures, manifestly declare his providence. All creatures partake of his goodness, he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. He has not left himself without a witness of his providential goodness in any age to any people, Jews or Gentiles, in that he has done good unto them, given them rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. (Luke vi. 35; Matt. v. 45; Acts xiv. 17.)

8. The judgments of God in the earth, at different periods of time, are a demonstration of the providence of God. Who can believe that the universal deluge, the sweeping away of a world of ungodly men by a flood and saving eight persons only in an ark, were not the effects of providence? and that the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, with the cities of the plain, by fire and brimstone from heaven, was by accident. The same

* Supervacuum est in præsentia ostendere, non sine aliquo custode tantum opus stare, nec nunc fiderum certum discursum fortuiti impetus esse. Seneca de Providentia, c. 1.

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may be observed of the plagues of Egypt, the captivities of the Israelites, the destruction of their neighbors, the Moabites, Edomites, &c. so that the name of one of them is not to be found in the world, as was foretold; when the Jews, though scattered, are yet preserved. The earthquakes, famine, pestilence, fire and sword, which are frequently in the world, show a divine providence; for God is *known by the judgments which he executeth.* (Psalm ix. 16.)

II. *Distinctions Used to Explain the Doctrine of Providence.*

1. Providence may be considered as *immediate* and *mediate.* Immediate providence is that exercised by God of himself, without the use of any means, instrument, or second cause. Thus the world is upheld by himself, by his own power, without the intervention of any other. God sometimes works without means, as when he made the earth fruitful before any rain, or dew, or mist fell upon it, or before there was any man to till it, (Gen. ii. 5, 6,) and as he supportcd the body of Moses in the mount, and of Christ in the wilderness, without food for the space of forty days and forty nights; and as he sometimes has wrought salvation in the midst of the earth. Sometimes he works above means, and of this kind are all miraculous operations. God works sometimes contrary to the nature of things, of means, and second causes; as when he caused waters, which naturally flow or stand, to rise up and divide, and as when he caused the sun, which naturally goes forth and forward as a giant to run his race, to stand still. All which God sometimes does; that is, acts immediately, and without the use of

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means, and even above and contrary to them; to show that he is not confined to means and second causes; and that his people who trust in him, may not despair when circumstances are at the worst, and there appears no way of deliverence. Mediate providence is exercised in the use of means, or by them; which God does not from any defect of power; but, as Dr. Ames* observes, because of the abundance of his goodness, that he might communicate, as it were, some dignity of efficiency to the creatures; and in them make his own efficiency the more discernable. Hence it may be observed, that he sometimes makes use of means to produce great and noble effects, which are unlikely, and for which they do not seem to have any adaptation, as when with a small army, he gives victory over a large one, and sometimes he makes proper means ineffectual to answer their end, for which they seem to be well adapted. What seems more for the safety of a king than a well-disciplined and numerous army? and yet these are sometimes of no service, and are vain things for safety. (Psalm xxx. iii. 16, 17.) And what more fit to support the life and to refresh and nourish when hungry, than wholesome food? yet men may eat, and not have enough or be nourished by it. (Hos. iv. 10.) Indeed, ordinarily God does work by means; he makes the earth fruitful by snow and rain descending upon it; whereby it gives seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; produces grass for cattle, and herb for the service of men, with other necessaries of life.

2. Providence may be considered both as *ordinary* and *extraordinary*——Ordinary providence is exercised

* Medulla Theolog. l. i. c. 9. s. 6.

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in the common course of means, and by the chain of second causes; and according to the original law of nature impressed on beings from the beginning. Extraordinary providence is that in which God goes out of his common way; and which consists of miraculous operations—as before observed—such as exceed the power of nature.

3. Providence may be considered as *universal* and *singular;* or, as general and particular. Universal or general providence is what relates to the whole world, and all things in it; and is expressed by upholding and preserving all things that are created. It is God's sustentation, preservation and continuance of creatures in their being. A singular, or particular providence, is concerned with every individual, and especially with rational creatures and their actions. It is certain that God in his providence is concerned not only for the world in general, but for every individual in it. Every star in the heavens is known by him, taken notice of and preserved: *He bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names——for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.* (Isa. xl. 26.) And even a sparrow does not fall to the ground without his notice and will. (Psalm l. 10, 11; Matt. x. 29.)

4. Providence may be considered as *common* and *special.* Common providence is that which belongs to the whole world, and all the creatures in it, and to all mankind, and is exercised in the common and ordinary way. *Special* providence is what relates to the church of God in all ages. The Jewish church, under the former dispensation, was distinguished from all the people of the earth, and chosen to be a special and

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peculiar people; and the Christian church, under the Gospel dispensation, was particularly cared for at the beginning of it, and remarkably increased and preserved under the persecution of the heathen emperors; and has been, and will be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, in the wilderness, during the reign of antichrist, and then will become great and glorious. Moreover God, as the God of providence, is the Saviour and Preserver of all men; but especially of *them that believe.* (1 Tim. iv. 10.)

5. Providence may be considered as real and moral. Real is that which concerns things and their essence, and by which they are sustained and preserved. Moral providence, or what is commonly called God's moral government of the world, respects rational creatures, to whom God has given a law, as the rule of their actions.

III. *The Author and Instruments of Providence.*

God, who is in the heavens, and looks down upon the earth, does therein whatever he pleases: he sitteth King forever, and his kingdom rules over all. Elihu puts such a question as this, *Who hath disposed the whole world?* (Job xxxiv. 13,) and the answer must be, He that made it has a right to dispose it, and of all things in it; and he does dispose thereof according to his pleasure; *All things are of him*, in creation; and all things are *through him* in providence, and all things are to him, directed and ordered to his glory. (Rom. xi. 36.) God, Father, Son and Spirit, are the one efficient Cause and Author of providence.

Of the many instruments of which God makes use of in the administration of providence are the angels,

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good and bad. Good angels are the ministers of God that do his pleasure; these stand continually before him, wait his orders and are ready to perform any service. They are *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who are heirs of salvation.* Evil angels are also sometimes employed in the affairs of providence; either for the infliction of punishment on the wicked, or for the correction and chastisement of the people of God. In the plagues of Egypt, the Psalmist says, God *cast* upon the *Egyptians the fierceness of his anger, wrath and indignation, by sending evil angels among them.* (Psalm lxxviii. 49.) An evil spirit offered himself to be a lying spirit, in the mouths of Ahab's prophets, which he had permission to be, and thereby brought about, in providence, the death of that prince, as was foretold. (1 Kings xxii. 21—34.) Satan, the adversary of good men, obtained leave from the Lord to destroy the substance, family and health of Job; which was granted for chastisement and for the trial of his faith and patience. The coming of antichrist was after the working, and through the efficacy of Satan, by divine permission, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; with which so much in providence has been so closely connected for more than a thousand years past, and will continue to the end of his reign.

2. Kings, princes and civil magistrates, good and bad, have been, and are instruments in the hands of God, for executing his providences in the world. The powers that be, are ordained of God, and are his ministers. (Rom. xiii. 1, 4.) And because they have their power and authority, their commission and capacity from God, are his vicegerents, act under him, personate him and

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are his representatives, they are called gods. (Psalm lxxxii. 6.) *By* him good *kings reign and princes decree justice;* from him they have wisdom and capacity to make good laws, and power to put them in execution, for the good of the people. Such a one was David, raised up by God to fulfil his will. There have been but few of this kind; but some there have been, and more there will be in the latter day, when kings shall be nursing fathers to Zion, and queen nursing mothers. The seven angels that shall have the vials of God's wrath to pour forth on the antichristian states to their destruction, are seven Christian kings, or protestant princes, who will have a commission from God to do that work. Evil kings, however, those who have had no true knowledge of God, have been raised up, and made use of in providence, either for the good of the church and the people of God, as Cyrus, king of Persia, whom the Lord girded, though he knew him not, and held his right hand to subdue nations, and particularly Babylon; that he might be in a capacity, and have an opportunity of releasing the captive Jews, as was foretold of him two hundred years before he was born. (Isa. xliv. 28, and xlv. 1—13.) And sometimes wicked princes have been used as scourges of God's people, for their correction, as Sennacherib, king of Assyria; of whom it is said: *O Assyria, the rod of mine anger, and the staff, in their hand is mine indignation! Howbeit he,* the Assyrian monarch, *meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so,* that he is an instrument, in the hand of God, to correct his people; *but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off, nations not a few,* to gratify his ambition, pride and cruelty. (Isa. x 5, 6, 7.)

3. The work of ministers of the word lies much in

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convincing men of sin, and in directing them in the way of salvation; and it has a very close connection with the providence of God, which is exercised therein and thereby. Masters of families, both by their instructions and examples, are very serviceable in providence, to those under them; and, indeed, every man, in whatsoever station he is, has a work to do, which, in providence, is ordered and disposed to answer some end.

4. Even irrational and inanimate creatures, the several meteors in the air, are under the direction of providence.

Now, whatever of good or evil may come to the children of men, by any and all of these, it is not to be attributed to the instruments, but to the God of providence in whose hands they are. All the good things of life—the wealth and riches of which men are possessed, in whatever manner obtained, whether by inheritance, by bequest, or by their own industry, yet all must be ascribed to God. *Riches and honor come of thee,* says David, (1 Chron. xxix. 12,) who had amassed a vast quantity of riches, a great part of which he got by his victories over the Moabites, Syrians and others. But who gave him the victory? God; and, therefore, as he ascribes his riches as he does his military honor and glory, to him. In like manner as Job, through the providence of God, became the greatest man in the east for worldly substance, so by the same providence he lost all. And though the Sabeans and Chaldeans were the instruments of his loss, he does not impute it to them, nor to Satan, who instigated them to it; but to the Lord: saying, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!* (Job i. 21.)

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IV. *The Several Parts and Branches of Providence*

Are chiefly these two, conservation or preservation of all things created, and the government of them.

1. Conservation, or preservation of Creatures, and the sustaining of them in their being is expressed by these several phrases: *Thou preservest them all;* that is, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and seas, and all therein. (Nehem. ix. 6.) *Upholding all things by the word of his power;* that is, the worlds made by him. (Heb. i. 2, 3.) *By him all things consist,* even all things created by him in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible. (Col. i. 16, 17.)

That the sustentation and preservation of the creatures in their being, is of God, and must be so, may be proved,

From the nature and perfections of God, particularly his independence. God is an independent Being; all creatures depend on him, but he on none; *Of him, through him, and to him are all things.* (Rom. xi. 36.) If creatures could or do support and preserve themselves in their being, they would be independent, and then there would be more independents than one, and so more gods than one.

From the nature of creatures, which is to be dependent on the Creator, *he holdeth our soul in life.*

From the weakness of creatures to support and preserve themselves. If any creature could preserve *itself,* it might be thought that man could; but he cannot. But *there is no man that hath power over the Spirit, to retain the Spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death.*

The same power put forth in creation, is required for the preservation of the creatures made; (Rom. 1.

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20; Heb. i. 3,) and, indeed, preservation is only a continued creation.

Were God to withdraw his supporting hand, creatures would soon come to destruction and perish: the whole fabric of the world would at once fall to pieces: *The earth and all the inhabitants of it, are dissolved*, that is, they would be, were it not for what follows, *I bear up the pillars of it.* (Psalm lxxv. 3.)

The whole world is a building, and God is its architect: *He that built all things is God.* But this building differs from any building of man. A man may erect an edifice, and when he has done, leave it to itself, to stand or fall; and it does stand without him, and may continue many years after the architect is dead. The reason of this is, that such an edifice is only the effect of art; the builder does not make the materials, but only fashions them to his purpose, and puts them together. But God, the great architect, has not only put together the world, in its beautiful order, but he has made the very matter of which it consists, and for the support of that his almighty power that created it, is requisite and necessary.

This preservation includes all the creatures God has made. The phrases by which it is expressed, declare that God preserves them *all;* that he upholds *all* things, and that by him *all* things consist.

Some of the individuals of the creation are sustained and preserved, as they were from the beginning. The *prima materia*, the first matter of which all things were made still continues; for matter is never annihilated, though it passes into different forms and figures. The ordinances of the heavens, and the heavens themselves, are as they were when first created; the sun is supported

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in its being, continued in its motion, and constantly supplied with light and heat, which it continually emits The stars, every one of them, keep their place, their station or course: and because that God is *strong in power*, who sustains and preserves them, *not one faileth*, (Isa. xl. 26,) for what are called falling stars, are no stars, but meteors kindled in the air, which burn and blaze awhile, and fall. A new star, so called, because not seen before, sometimes appears, but no one is lost The heavens God has established by his understanding and power, so that they remain as they were; and though it is said they *shall perish, wax old as a garment, and as a vesture be changed and folded*, (Prov. iii. 19, Psalm cii. 25, 26; Heb. i. 11, 12,) yet as a garment folded up *still* remains, though in a different form; so the heavens will not perish, as to matter and substance, but be changed as to form, quality and use, in which respect they will be new and continue. And the same may be said of the earth; for God *has laid the foundations of it, that it should not be removed for ever*, (Psalm civ. 5,) and though it underwent some change at the universal deluge, so that the apostle distinguishes the earth that then was, from that which now is, yet as to substance it is the same. And though at the general conflagration, the earth, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up, and a new earth rise up out of it; yet it will be the same as to matter and substance. It will be different *only* as to form—an earth without a sea; and as to quality, purified and refined; and as to use, inhabited only by righteous persons. (2 Pet. iii. 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13; Rev. xxi. 1.)

2. The other branch of providence is government, or

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the wise and orderly disposal of all creatures, to answer the ends for which they are made and preserved. God is the Governor of the whole universe; and he who is the Creator, has a right to govern it. His kingdom is an everlasting one, and his dominion endures throughout all generations. (Psalm xxii. 28, and ciii. 19, and cxlv. 13.) And as the government of the world is a branch of providence; so from the wise and orderly disposition of things in it, it may be strongly concluded there is a Providence; or that there is a God, who by his providence governs, guides, orders and directs all things in the world. For, as Cicero* observes, if a man comes into a house, or a school, or a court of judicature, and takes notice of the order, manner, and discipline of things observed therein, he must conclude within himself, there is some one who presides there, and who is obeyed; and much more in such motions, in such vicissitudes and orders, and of so many and great affairs in which there is never any failure, one must needs conclude, that such motions of nature are governed by an intelligent Being.

Inanimate creatures are governed, and directed by the providence of God to those ends for which they were created. There is a law of nature impressed upon such creatures, which they constantly obey; an inclination in them which they perpetually follow. So the sun and planets naturally take their revolutions. Thus the rain and snow come down from heaven, and fall upon the earth, that drinks in the moisture, receives the seed cast unto it, cherishes and fructifies it, and throws it up again; whereby it brings forth seed to the sower, and bread to the eater.

† De Natura Deorum, l. 2.

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Animate irrational creatures are governed, and directed in providence, by an instinct of nature, placed in them by their Creator, to such actions as are agreeable to their natures. Thus with what art and skill do birds build their nests? with what tenderness do they cherish and provide food for their young? that little creature, the ant, though it has no *guide, overseer or ruler*, no visible and external one, yet *provides its meat in the summer, and gathers its food in harvest. The conies are but a feeble folk*, yet are so wise under the direction of providence, and by an instinct in nature, as to make *their houses in the rocks*, to shelter them from danger. The *locusts have no king* to command and direct them, *yet they go forth all of them by bands*, march in rank and order, like a well-disciplined army. *The spider taketh hold with her hands*, on the thread of her webs, she spins, and is in kings' *palaces*, where, though her webs are often destroyed, she weaves them again. (Prov. vi. 7, 8, and xxx. 25, 26, 27.) Birds of passsage, as the stork, turtle, crane, and swallow, know the appointed times of their going and coming, and exactly observe them. (Jer. viii. 7.)

3. Rational creatures are governed by a law in a moral way. Mankind have either the law and light of nature or a written law, and are dealt with according as they obey. With the obedient it is well now and hereafter; while the disobedient shall eat the fruit of their doings, now or in the world to come. And there is a concourse of providence which attends all men, all their actions, yea, even their words and thoughts, (Prov. xvi. 1, 9, and xxix. 21,) which are all overruled by providence, to answer some end. Even evil actions themselves, as in the case of Joseph's

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brethren who sold him into Egypt—God meant it for good, and overruled it to save many people alive. (Gen. i. 20.) Moreover, men are governed as rational creatures, in a political way; kings and princes, as before observed, are instruments by whom God governs and administers this part of the affairs of providence. He sets up kings and judges at his pleasure, and enjoins men obedience to them.

V. *The Object of Providence.*

The whole universe is the object of providence.

1. The whole inanimate creation, or creatures without life, whether in the heavens or in the earth,* are subject to divine providence, under the direction of it, and act according to ancient and original laws, which their Author has imposed upon them, and from which they do not swerve.

2. Organic creatures, whether they have only either a vegetative life, or a sensitive animal life, are under the care of divine providence. Vegetables, herbs, plants and trees, grass for the cattle and herb for the service of man; when they are withered, or they do not spring up, not only the *beasts groan, the herds of cattle are perplexed, and the flocks of sheep are made desolate, because they have no pasture*, (Joel i. 18,) but men sensibly feel the loss; God sometimes in providence turns *a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* (Psalm cvii. 34.) As every spire of grass proclaims a God, so it also declares a providence, and instructs men to trust therein: *Consider the lillies of the*

* Aristotle owned, that the providence of God reached to heavenly things, and to earthly ones according to their sympathy or congruence with the heavenly. Diog. Laert. .. 5. in Vita ejus.

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field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin; but being raised by providence, they thrive, and are clothed with a beauty and glory, which Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed with: *Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field,* with such verdure and gaiety, *which to-day* is, *and to-morrow is cast into the oven; shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* (Matt. vi. 28, 29, 30.) Other creatures that live a sensitive animal life, yet irrational, are cared for in providence: *He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens that cry.* (Psalm cxlvii. 9.) *Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them, are ye not much better than they?* (Matt. vi. 26.) The heathen acknowledge the providence of God, as regarding the most mean and minute. Plato says,* that things small and great are not neglected by God, neither through ignorance nor sloth; and that such an imagination is false and wicked; so Chrysippus.†

3. Rational creatures, angels and men, are more especially the objects of divine providence. Good angels are not only upheld in being by God, but are directed by his providence, and ordered by his will. He does according to his will among them, even in the armies of the heavens, which they are. (Dan. iv. 35.) Evil angels are under the restraints and checks of providence; they are held in the chains of it, nor can they go any where, nor do anything but by permission, as the cases of Job, and of the man possessed of a legion, and of Peter show, (Job i. 11, 12, and ii. 5, 6; Mark v. 10—13; Luke xxii. 31.)

* De Legibus, l. 10. p. 956.
† Apud Plutarch. de Stoic. repugn. p. 1056.

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As all men have their life and breath, and all things from God; so they live, and move, and have their being in him. He looks down from heaven and beholds them all, takes care of and provides for them: *Thou preservest man and beast.* (Psalm xxxiii. 13, 14.) The providence of God is concerned in the production of every man, and it attends him in every stage and step of life, even unto death.

As in the birth of every one, the time and place for each are fixed in the purposes of God, so the providence of God exactly executes those purposes. (Eccles. iii. 1, 2; Acts xvii. 26; Gen. xxxiii. 5, and xlviii. 9.)

The providence of God attends men in every stage of life, providing things necessary, and preserving them from many dangers. It appears in their education, the foundation of which is laid in childhood. Some have a better education than others, by which their tender minds are opened and improved; and some have greater capacities to receive the instructions given them. But all have either more or less to fit them for the stations in life which are designed for them. All are enlightened with the light of nature and reason. There is a rational spirit in every man; and the inspiration of the Almighty gives him understanding in natural things, teaches him, and makes him wiser than the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of the heaven; whereby he is qualified, in a course of time, for such employments in life as he is designed to, (Job xxxii. 8, and xxxv. 11,) and when fit for business, the providence of God is greatly seen in directing him to such calling, occupation and station in life as he is best qualified for. And it is easily discerned in giving diverse inclinations. Some choose an employment on

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the sea, some take to agriculture, some to mechanical trades and manufactures, in all which the providence of God greatly appears for the general good. The marriage state of life, into which most men enter, is too important an affair to escape the providence of God. There is more truth in that common saying than many are aware of, that *marriages are made in heaven;* that is, they are appointed of God, and brought about in providence; and often in a remarkable manner. Instances of this may be observed in the direction of Abraham's servant sent to take a wife for Isaac; and in the case of Boaz and Ruth. (Gen. xxiv. 14, 15, 21, 27; Ruth iv. 13, 14.) Success in the world depends on the providence of God. Some rise early, and sit up late, yet barely get a subsistence. Others, through the blessing of God on their diligence and industry, become rich. Poverty and riches are both in the hand of God, and he disposes of them at his pleasure: *The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all;* not the maker of them as men, which is an observation any one could make, as well as the wise man; but the maker of them as rich and poor; this is an observation worthy of the wisest of men; for *the Lord maketh poor and maketh rich.* Agur was sensible of this, and, therefore, desires that God would give him neither poverty nor riches, for reasons he mentions. (Prov. xxii. 2, and xxx. 8; 1 Sam. ii. 7.) All afflictions, of whatsoever sort, are under the direction of providence; they do not spring out of the ground, or come by chance, but by the appointment of God; and are overruled in providence, to answer some ends or other. All diseases are the servants of God, are at his command, and sent to do his pleasure. And as the

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providence of God attends men in their infancy, childhood, youth and manhood, and in all circumstances relative to them, in the course of these, so in old age; he that has been the guide of their youth, and conducted them in every part of life, is the staff of old age, and will not then cast off, leave, nor forsake; he carries from the womb even to old age and hoary hairs. (Psalm lxxi. 9, 18; Isa. xlvi. 3, 4.) The term of life as it is fixed by God, is finished by providence exactly in the manner and at the time appointed.

There is a special providence which relates to the people of God. God is *the Saviour of all men*, in a providential way, but especially *of those that believe.* (1 Tim. iv. 10.) Not only is the eye of love, grace and mercy on those who fear the Lord, but also his eye of providence. The divine record abounds with instances of the special providence of God respecting the saints, which need not be cited.

But besides such instances, there is a special providence that attends all the people of God. It commences before conversion, even as soon as they are born. This is what the apostle seems to intend in Gal. i. 15, in regard to himself: *When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb;* which cannot be understood of his separation in election, which was earlier than his birth, even in eternity; nor of his separation from others in effectual vocation, for that was not so early; but of his being taken under the care of divine providence in a distinguished manner. God's eye was upon him from thence to the time of his conversion, waiting to be gracious to him. (Acts vii. 58, and viii. 1, 3, and ix. 1—5.)

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It appears at conversion. As effectual calling itself is according to the purpose of God, as to time place and means; so the providence of God is concerned in the bringing of it about agreeable thereunto.

After conversion the providence of God appears, in preserving his people from many evils and dangers; in providing for their temporal good, so that they shall want no good thing fitting and convenient for them. Rather than they shall suffer want, God will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the vallies. (Psalm xxxiv. 9, 10, and lxxxiv. 11; Isa. xli. 17, 18.) So it is in directing them in all their ways, causing all things to work together for their good; and in being their guide even unto death. (Rom. viii. 28; Psalm xxxiv. 19, and xlviii. 14.)

4. The providence of God is concerned in all actions; in every thing that is done in the world, from the beginning to the end. God is a *God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.* (1 Sam. ii. 3.) All natural actions, which are common or peculiar to every creature. All necessary actions; such as either arise from the necessity of nature, or are so by the ordination and appointment of God. By the necessity of nature, waters naturally and necessarily descend and flow; and fire naturally and necessarily burns what is combustible. By the appointment of God, indeed, everything is necessary, because he has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. So, for instance, the sufferings of Christ being by the determinate counsel of God, were necessary. Hence those phrases, *ought* not Christ to suffer; the Son of man *must* suffer many things; so likewise offences *must* come, and heresies *must* be. They were necessary, by

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a necessity of immutability; that is, they must and do unchangeably come to pass in providence; but not by a necessity of coaction or force on the authors of them, who do what they do most freely. Men could not act more freely than did the crucifiers of Christ.

All free and voluntary actions, are under the direction of the providence of God. The thoughts, purposes, schemes and determinations of the will of men, than which nothing is more free; are under the influence of divine providence: *A man's heart deviseth his way;* forms schemes, which he purposes to execute; settles the method of their execution and chooses the way which he proposes to walk. *But the Lord directeth his steps,* and guides him in providence to take quite a different course: *The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tonuge, are from the Lord.* What is more free and arbitrary than the heart, mind and will of a sovereign despotic prince? yet *the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will.* The cabinet councils of princes and presidents are all overruled by the providence of God, to answer his own purposes. (Prov. xvi. 1, 9, and xxi. 1.)

All contingent actions, or such as are called matters of chance, fall under the divine providence. What may seem more of a contingency, or matter of chance than the shooting of a bird? And yet, *One sparrow shall not fall on the ground,* that is, be shot and drop on the ground, *without your Father;* without his knowledge, will and providence. (Matt. x. 29.) What is more contingent than the killing of a man unawares, as it is described, Deut. xix. 4, 5? and yet the providence of God is so far concerned in such an affair, that God

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is said to deliver such a man *into the hand* of his neighbor. (Exod. xxi. 13.) What we call accidental death is providential. What can be thought more of a chance than the casting of a lot, and yet the issue, which is of God, is certain: *The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.* (Prov. xvi. 33.)

5. All transactions in the world and among men, whether good or evil, are under the direction of providence. Good actions are of God, the fountain of all goodness; there is no good thing in fallen man naturally, and, therefore, no good thing comes out of him, and without the grace of God, he can do nothing of that kind. But God works efficaciously in the hearts of his people, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure; he opens their hearts to attend to the word spoken to them; he bends their wills, and inclines their hearts to that which is good, and gives them power and grace to effect it; he circumcises their hearts to love him, the Lord their God; he creates them anew in Christ, that they may be capable of performing good works; for though without him they can do nothing, yet through his strengthening they can do all things required.

There are many evil things done in the world, in which the providence of God is concerned. And these are of two sorts, the evil of calamities, distress and afflictions, and the evil of sin.

The evils of calamities, are either more public or more private. Of the more public; are the calamities and distresses on nations and kingdoms, and bodies of men, and which are never without the providence of God; *I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things*, in a providential way. (Isa. xlv. 7.) In this sense

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are we to understand the prophet when he says, *Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?* (Amos iii. 6.) Even cities themselves come to destruction, and their memorial perishes with them. Where are now Thebes with its hundred gates—Babylon, with its broad walls, the famous Persepolis, and Jerusalem, the joy of the whole earth? Where are the famous monarchies, the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman. The fall of these, according to divine prediction, has been accomplished by divine providence. Under this head may be observed the judgments of God in the world, as the sword, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, &c. When the sword is drawn, it is God who gives it a charge and appoints it. (Jer. xlvii. 6, 7.) Famine is one of God's arrows shot out of the bow of providence; (Amos iv. 6; Hag. i. 11,) and pestilence is another which walks in darkness, and wastes at noon-day.

There are other calamities and afflictions of a more private nature, either inflicted on wicked men by way of punishment for sin, or on good men in love, as fatherly corrections and chastisements: *for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son that he receiveth.* (Heb. xii. 6.) This was the grand objection to divine providence of Epicurus* and his followers, the only persons among the heathen who objected to it. They observe that wicked men for the most part prospered, and good men, or virtuous men, as they call them, were generally afflicted and distressed; and, therefore, they could not believe that God concerned himself with human affairs.† And this has been a stumbling to good men,

* Vid. Lactant. Institut. l. 5. c. 10.

† —— Hominum nimium securus abes, neu solicitus prodesse bonis, nocuisse malis? Senecæ Hippol. v. 971.

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which they know not how well to reconcile with the justice of God, as it was to Asaph and Jeremiah. (Psalm lxxiii. 2, 3, 12, 13, 14; Jer. xii. 1, 2.) But it should be observed, that wicked men, though they prosper and abound in riches, and are not seemingly in trouble as other men, yet are not so happy as may be supposed; for as our Lord says, *A man's life*, that is, the happiness of it, *consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* (Luke xii. 15.) Some have much, and have not a power to make use of it, either for their own comfort or the good of others; and where is the difference then between having and not having? Others, on the contrary, are profuse and extravagant, live very luxurious and debauched lives, and bring upon themselves painful disease and distress of mind. Some cannot sleep, either through fear of loosing what they have by thieves, &c. or through care in contriving schemes to increase it; and some through envy cannot enjoy themselves because a neighbor exceeds them in grandeur and wealth. It should be also observed that a good man, though afflicted, is not so unhappy as is imagined. He has more peace, satisfaction and contentment in what he has, though mean and little, than the wicked rich man in all his abundance. (Psalm xxxvii. 16; Prov. xv. 16, 17.) Besides, the good man, though poor in one sense, is rich in a better; and is not only heir of a kingdom, but is possessed of one which cannot be moved—the kingdom of grace. He is possessed of the riches of grace, and is entitled to the riches of glory. Hereafter, in a future state, this difficulty will be quite removed, and entirely vanish, when the wicked rich man who was clothed in purple, fared sumptuously every day and had his good th ngs here, will have his evil things,

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and Lazarus, the afflicted man, who was clothed with rags, and had his evil things, will have his good things. The one will be tormented, and the other comforted. The wicked will go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal; and then justice will shine in its true lustre and glory.

There are the evils of sinful actions, from which the providence of God is not to be excluded. This is the greatest difficulty in the doctrine of providence—how it should have a concern with sinful actions, or with actions to which sin is annexed, as some choose to express themselves. There are two things to be set down for certain and eternal truths, whether we are capable of reconciling them to our own satisfaction and that of others, or not. The one is, that God is not and cannot be the author of sin; the other is, that the providence of God has a concern with and in all sinful actions in some sense or other. That God is not the author of sin is most certain, for there is nothing sinful in his nature. Plato* says, of good things there is no other cause, but of evil things we must seek for any other cause but God. There is nothing but good in him, and, therefore, nothing sinful can come from him, or be done by him. He has not only forbidden sin by his law, but is the avenger of it. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, come from him on every soul that does evil; wherefore *let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.* (James i. 13.) On the other hand, to exclude the providence of God from all concern in the sinful actions of men, is contrary to the independence of God. Moreover to exempt the providence of God from all

* De Republica, l. 2. p. 605.

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concern in sinful actions, or in actions to which sin is annexed, would be to banish providence, in a great measure, from the world. For, comparatively speaking, what is done in the world that is not sinful? The following observations may tend to the settling of this point, and the removing of the above difficulty.——(1.) That God supports men in their being, whilst they are sinning. He could have struck Ananias and Sapphira dead, before they committed the sin they did, and so have prevented it.——(2.) God, in innumerable instances, does not hinder the commission of sin. That he can do it is certain, because he has done it; he withheld Abimelech from sinning against him as he told him, (Gen. xx. 6,) and he who withheld Abimelech, could have withheld Adam and any of his sons, whom he has not. He restrained Laban from injuring Jacob as Laban himself owned; and Balaam from cursing Israel which he would gladly have done. And so God could prevent the innumerable sins of men, which yet he does not. We, as creatures, are bound to hinder all the evil we can; but God is under no such obligation.——(3.) God permits sin to be done, or suffers it to be, in his providence. This is the language of Scripture: *Who in time past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways;* and these ways were sinful ones. (Acts xiv. 16.) And this permission is not a connivance at sin; nor a concession or grant of it; much less does it express any approbation of it. Nor is it barely a leaving men to the liberty of their wills, to do as they please; as though he was careless and indifferent about it. It is not a mere naked permission, but a voluntary one, yea, an efficacious one; God's will is in it, and efficacy attends it. Hence——(4.) God is represented as

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active in relation to it he not only suffers men to walk in their sinful ways, but *he gives them up to their own hearts lusts; he gives them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; he sends them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie.* (Psalm lxxxi. 12; Rom. i. 28; 2 Thess. ii. 11.) Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt, but God sent him thither; he bid Shimei curse David; he gave the evil spirit a commission to go forth and do what he proposed, to be a lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab's prophets. (Gen. xlv. 5; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; 1 Kings xxii. 21, 22.)——(5.) It will be proper to distinguish between an act, and the obliquity of it; every action, as an action, a natural one, is of God, the first Mover in whom all move. The creature is dependent on God, as the Creator, in every action, as well as in his being; but the obliquity and irregularity of the action, as it swerves from the rule of God's law, is from man. This is sometimes illustrated by divines like this: a man rides a lame horse, who by whipping and spurring is the cause and occasion of the motion of the horse, but he is not the cause of his limping. That arises from a disorder in the creature itself. The sun in the firmament, when it exhales a nauseous scent from a dunghill, is the cause of the exhalation; but it is not the cause of the ill flavor.——(6.) God in his providence may put in the way of persons things that are good in themselves; which may give an opportunity, and be the occasion of drawing out the corruptions of mens' hearts. Thus God in his providence directed Joseph to dream and to tell his dreams; which drew upon him the envy of his bretheren; and God put it into the heart of Jacob to send him to visit them in the fields, which

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gave them an opportunity to form and execute evil against him. David was brought by providence into afflicted circumstances, which obliged him to flee, and pass by the way where Shimei lived; and which gave him an opportunity of doing that with his mouth, which very probably he had done in his heart before. There is sometimes a concurrence of things in providence, in themselves not sinful, which are the occasion of sin; as in the affair of David and Bathsheba. Various circumstances combined, gave an opportunity and were the occasion of committing sin, which David fell into, not being restrained by the grace of God. Preservation from opportunities, the occasion of sin, is owing to the kind providence of God. Of this a heathen* was sensible, and, therefore, gave thanks to God that when he had a disposition to sin, and should have committed it, had an occasion offered; yet θεων ευνοια, by the good providence of God, no such occasion from the concourse of things, did offer. God gives to some men wealth and riches, and these are the occasions of much sin to them. He gives a law which forbids men to sin; but as the poet says, *Nitimur in vetitum;* or rather as the apostle says, *Sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.* (Rom. vii. 8.) The Gospel also sent to men, is the occasion of stirring up the corruption of their nature, their pride and passion, to an opposition to it, and it becomes *the saviour of death unto death* unto them. (2 Cor. ii. 16.)——(7.) The concern of providence about sinful actions, further appears in limiting and setting bounds; as to the waves of the sea, saying, *hitherto shalt thou come, and no further.* (Job.

* Antoninus de Seipso, l. 1. s. 17.

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xxxviii. 11.) Thus Joseph's brethren would have run greater lengths, had they not been restrained by the overruling providence of God. Their first scheme was to put him to death; which was disconcerted by Reuben. And though it is amazing to observe how much sin is committed in the world; yet considering the wretched depravity of human nature, the temptations of Satan, and the snares of the world, it is more wonderful that no more is committed; which can only be ascribed to the restraining providence of God.——(8.) God in the affairs of providence, is to be considered as the Rector and Governor of the world, and the judge of the whole earth; and in this branch of it, respecting sin, he overrules either for the punishment of those who commit it, or of others, or else for good. He sometimes punishes one sin with another. Plato* says, a licence to sin, is the greatest punishment of sin. So disobedient Israel, because they would not hearken to the voice of God, and would have nothing to do with him, were therefore given up to their own hearts lust. Sometimes God overrules the sins of men for good; as the sin of Adam, for the glorifying of his perfections; the crucifixion of Christ for the salvation of mankind.†

In conclusion: all the providences of God are executed in the wisest manner; though they may not always appear clear to us. They are all accomplished in the

* In Theæteto.

† Clemens of Alexandria says, (Stromat. l. 1. p. 312,) "it is the greatest argument of divine providence that he does not suffer evil, which arises from a voluntary defection, to remain useless and unprofitable, nor to be altogether hurtful; but, as he after expresses it, that which is devised by evil persons, God brings on to a good and useful end."

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most holy and righteous manner ; and even such as are concerned about sin, are clear from any imputation of it : *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.* (Ps. cxlv. 17.) They are executed with power irresistible ; and are immutably performed, according to the unchangeable will of God, who works all things in providence after the counsel of his will.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONFIRMATION OF THE ELECT ANGELS, AND THE FALL OF THE NON-ELECT.

HAVING considered at large the doctrines of creation and providence, we may proceed to observe the first and principal events of providence relating to angels and men ; beginning with the angels, the first created of rational creatures, and in whom the providence of God first was exercised. And as there was a distinction made of elect and non-elect, as has been shown in a preceding chapter, we may notice :

I. *The Confirmation of the Elect Angels.*

As God chose them to a state of holiness and happiness, as soon as he created them, he confirmed them in that state. The providence of God was not only concerned in their preservation and sustentation in their being when created, (Col. i. 16, 17,) but in their government Now the government of rational creatures is

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in a moral way, by giving them a law as the rule of their obedience; and such a law was given to angels, not of a positive nature, similar to that given to Adam, for bidding him on pain of death, to eat of the fruit of a certain tree, as a trial of his obedience to the whole will of God; since we read of no such law given to angels; nor of a law in the form of a covenant, as to men, since the angels do not appear to have had any federal head, they standing singly and alone, and each for himself. Nor do we ever read of good angels keeping covenant; nor of the evil angels being charged with the breach of covenant; but it was a law implanted in their nature, concreated with them in like manner as the law of nature was inscribed on Adam's heart, which is the same in substance with the written moral law, and with which angels are concerned, so far as its precepts are suitable to spiritual substances. This is perfectly obeyed by the good angels; and in this their perfect obedience and holiness, are they immutably confirmed from the moment of their creation; for this their confirmation is not owing to any merits they have through the good use of the freedom of their wills. Some have fancied that they were first in a state of probation, and having stood some time in their obedience, through the power of their free will, merited confirmation in that state from God. But a creature, even of the highest rank, can merit nothing at the hand of God: for *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* (Rom. xi. 35.) The obedience of angels was due to God, and could merit nothing of him. Nor was their confirmation owing to the merits of Christ. Christ is a Mediator between God and men; but not

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between God and angels; for though he may be allowed to be a medium of conservation of angels; yet not a Mediator of peace and reconciliation, which they needed not; he is not a Saviour and Redeemer of them he merited nothing for them by his incarnation, sufferings and death; these were not on their account; hence the angels say, *Unto* YOU *is born this day*, (not unto *us*,) *a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* (Luke ii. 11; Heb. ii. 14, 16, 17.) But their confirmation is owing to the free favor and good will of God, choosing them to a state of holiness and happiness; and to his putting them under the care and charge of Christ as the Head of all principality and power. (1 Tim. v. 21; Col. ii. 10.)

Now in this state of constant obedience and perfect holiness, they are immutably fixed by the will of God, and have from their creation continued in it, and ever will; as appears by their enjoyment of the presence of God perpetually. They always behold the face of God in heaven; they never left their habition, but have always resided in heaven, where they were first placed; and hence are called the angels of heaven. (Matt. xviii. 10, and xxiv. 36.) Their constant and perfect obedience to the will of God, is made the pattern of obedience in men: *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven;* that is, by the angels there. (Matt. vi. 10.)

The next remarkable event respecting angels, is

II. *The Sin and Fall of the Non-elect Angels.*

The heathen seem to have had some notion of the fall of the evil angels; for Plutarch speaks* of demons or devils, as θεηλατοι and ȣρανοπετεις, expelled by the gods,

* De Vitando ære Al. p. 8[illegible]).

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and fallen from heaven. The providence of God was equally concerned in the sustentation and conservation of them in their beings, as of the elect angels; and in which they are and will be everlastingly preserved. The same law also for the government of them, and as a rule of obedience, was given to them; or otherwise they could not be chargeable with sin. Now sin is a transgression of the law; where there is no law there is no transgression. (2 Pet. ii. 4; 1 John iii. 4; Rom. iv. 15.) These angels, in their original estate of creation, were in a capacity for obeying the law given them. Their will was inclined to it; and the bias of their minds was toward it; for they were created holy, just and good. The estate in which they now are, is not that in which they were made. It is expressly said that they *kept not their first estate*, and *abode not in the truth*, (Jude *v.* 6; John viii. 44,) which suppose a better estate than what they are now in, and that they were originally in an estate of *truth;* that is, of integrity, righteousness and holiness. Being left to the freedom of their will, which was mutable, and is that folly and weakness which angels in their original state were chargeable with by God, and in comparison with him; they sinned and fell, to which fall our Lord has reference when he says, *I beheld Satan as lightening fall from heaven*, (Luke x. 18)—that is, suddenly, swiftly and irresistibly.

1. What was the sin of the angels, by which they fell? this cannot be determined with precision, the Scriptures being silent about it; yet it is generally supposed, and is probable from the Scriptures, that their sin was Pride; which seems probable from 1 Tim. iii. 6. *Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the*

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condemnation of the devil; being guilty of the same sin, he is in danger of the same condemnation. They might have first begun with contemplating their own perfections and excellencies, which might lead to self-admiration, and issue in an over-weening opinion of themselves, so as to think more highly of themselves than they ought to have done; and to a conclusion that creatures of such high rank ought not to be subject to a law, and, therefore, cast off the yoke of the law, and departed from their allegiance and obedience to God. One of the names of Satan is Belial, without a yoke; and the children of the devil are called sons of Belial; not being subject to the law of God, (2 Cor. vi. 15; 2 Sam. xxiii. 6,) upon which they seem to have affected deity; and having revolted from God, set up for gods themselves. And this may seem to be confirmed by the manner in which they tempted our first parents to rebel against God; hoping to prevail by using the snare in which they themselves were taken: *Ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil;* (Gen. iii. 5,) as also by all the methods they have since taken to get themselves worshipped as gods. Satan has usurped to himself the title of the god of this world. There can be no greater evidence of pride, arrogance and impudence than the proposal he made to Christ, to give him all the kingdoms of this world, if he would but fall down and worship him. (Matt. iv. 9.)

Some have thought that envy was the sin of the devils, by which they fell, and unbelief may also be taken into the account. They must disbelieve the eternal power of God, and his truth and faithfulness to his word, or they would not dare to sin against him.

2. There are several questions often raised relative to

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the fall of angels; which may be worthy of some attention.

How and by what means came they to fall? they had no tempter; there were no creatures in being capable of tempting them to sin; they were left to their own free will, which was mutable, and so of themselves, and not through any temptation without them, sinned and fell. It is very probable that one of them, famous above the rest for his wisdom and strength, might begin the apostasy; and being in high esteem for his excellent qualifications, he gave the lead, and others followed his example; hence we read of the prince of devils, and of the prince of the power of the air, and of the devil and his angels. (Matt. xii. 24, and xxv. 41; Eph. ii. 2.)

It is sometimes asked, When did the angels fall? to which it may be answered, Not before the sixth day of the creation. As it is probable they might be created on the first day, when the heavens, their habitation, was made, and light was formed; so they continued in their first estate, during the six days of the creation; for on the sixth day, when all the creatures were made, *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.* And yet they must have fallen before Adam fell, because it was the serpent, or the devil in the serpent, either in a real one, or in the form of one, that beguiled Eve, and so was the cause and means of the fall of man. But, however, certain it is that the fall of the angels was very early; since the devil is called *a murderer from the beginning.* (John viii. 44.)

This question is sometimes put, What number of the angels fell? This cannot be said with any precision; some have thought that as many fell as stood; ground

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ing it on a passage in Ezek. xli. 18, where it is said, that on the wall of the temple were carved, with cherubim and palm-trees, a palm-tree between a cherub and a cherub. By cherubim they understand angels, and by palm-trees good men, who are supposed to fill up the places of fallen angels; and so conclude the same number fell as stood. But as such a sense of the text cannot easily be established, it is insufficient to build such a notion upon. Others have thought, that not so many fell as stood; since evil angels are never said to be innumerable, as the good angels are. (Heb. xii. 22.) And this they also gather from the words of Elisha to his servant; *Fear not; for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them;* and the servant's eyes were presently opened, and he saw the *mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about;* that is, angels in such forms. (2 Kings vi. 16, 17.) But the comparison is not between good and bad angels; but between the good angels and the Syrian host. Others fancy that a third part of the angels fell. This they take from Rev. xii. 4, where the *dragon* is said to *draw* with *his tail the third part of the stars of heaven;* but by the stars are not meant angels, but those who bore the character of the ministers of the word, who in that book are called stars, (chap. i. 20,) whom Satan, through his influence, prevailed upon to drop their character, and desert their office. However, it is certain, that not a few of the angels, but many of them fell; even so many as to form a kingdom, with a prince at its head, and there were so many that possessed one man, as to be called a legion, which consisted of some hundreds.

3 The state and condition into which the angels were

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brought by sin, may next be considered. They were originally angels of light; full of light, knowledge and understanding; but by sinning are become angels of darkness; and are called the power of darkness, and the ruler of darkness of this world, blind, and blinding others. (Col. i. 13; Eph. vi. 12; 2 Cor. iv. 4.) Whatever light and knowledge of natural things they retain, and which may be increased by long observation and experience; or whatever notional knowledge they have of evangelical truth, they have no spiritual and experimental knowledge; no rejoicing of hope; no light of spiritual joy and gladness; but all black despair. They were once pure and holy creatures; but through their sin and fall, became impure and unholy; and, therefore called *unclean spirits;* who delight in the impurities of sin; and take pleasure in drawing mankind into them. The devil is called emphatically and eminently, *the wicked one*, being notoriously and superlatively wicked; even wickedness itself. (Matt. x. 1, and xiii. 38; 1 John iii. 12, and v. 18.) Once they were lovers of God, and of their fellow-creatures; but are now at enmity with God and all that is good; and spiteful and malicious towards mankind. Satan is called emphatically the *enemy*, the enemy of God and of Christ, and of all good men; desirous of doing all the harm and mischief to them he can, or gets permission to do. These fallen angels, who were once in a guiltless state, are now in the most desperate circumstances; in chains of darkness and black despair, and under irremissible guilt—no pardon for them, nor hope of it for evermore.

4. Their punishment is both of loss and sense. They have lost the favor and presence of God, and they sensi

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bly feel his wrath and indignation. Sinning, they were hurled out of heaven, and deprived of their blissful state. The apostle Peter says, they were *cast down to hell*, (2 Pet. ii. 4.) but where that is, it is not easy to say; very probably upon their ejection out of heaven, they fell down into the air, since Satan is said to be the *prince of the power of the air*. (Eph. ii. 2.) Not that he has a power of moving the air, and of raising storms and tempests; but he is the ruler of the devils that dwell in the air;* from whence, by divine permission, they descend and rove about the earth, in chains, limited and restrained for the punishment of the wicked and for the trial of the graces of the good. But they do not as yet seem to have their full punishment inflicted; as may be learned from their words to Christ: *Art thou come hither to torment us before our time?* And they are said to be *reserved unto judgment, and unto the judgment of the great day;* when their full sentence will be pronounced and carried into execution; (Matt. vii. 29; 2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude *v.* 6,) which they *believe and tremble* at, (James ii. 19.) and which punishment will be everlasting. It is called *everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;* the fire of divine wrath, which will never be quenched, but always burn without intermission, to all all eternity; and a *lake of fire and brimstone*, where the devil, with the beast and false prophet will be tormented *day and night for ever and ever*. (Matt. xxv. 41; Rev. xx. 10.)

* It was a notion of the Chaldeans, that the air is full of demons, Laert. Proem. ad Vit. Philos. p. 5. and of Pythagoras, ibid. Vit. Philosoph. l. 8. in Vita ejus; and of Plato, Apuleius de Deo Socratis; and of the Jews, so R. Joseph Ben Gekatilia in Shaare ora, fol. 4. 1.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE HONOR AND HAPPINESS OF MAN IN A STATE OF INNOCENCE.

FOLLOWING the great events of providence which relate to angels, the next topic will be the important providences towards the human family; first observing the original state of innocence and the external honor happiness of that estate.

Man's First Habitation.

1. *And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden;* and there he put the man whom *he had formed.* (Gen. ii. 8.) This whole earth was made to be inhabited by man. *The heaven*, even *the heavens are the Lord's;* he has reserved that part of his creation for himself, for the habitation of his holiness; and for his attendants, the holy angels: *But the earth hath he given to the children of men.* (Isa. xlv. 18; Psalm cxv. 16.) And though Adam was heir and lord of the whole world, yet there was one particular spot more excellent than all the rest, assigned him for his residence. It is called the garden of God, because of his planting; and of Eden, because of its pleasantness and delightfulness, as the word signifies. Where this garden was cannot now be determined with any certainty. Most probably it was in Mesopotamia, as we read of an Eden mentioned along with some places in that country. (Isa. xxxvii. 12.) However, it is not to be known at this day; and there are

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many things that contribute to its obscurity. Left without any one to cultivate it, upon Adam's ejectment in course of time it must have become desolate; and especially from the curse taking place, as no doubt it did, upon it chiefly, and in the first place, as being man's peculiar habitation: *Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth.* And through the change it might have undergone, as did the whole earth by the flood, and through the alteration of the course of the rivers it is no wonder it cannot be identified at this day. However, it was so delightful a spot, at its first planting that the church of Christ is compared to it, and is called, in allusion to it, *a garden inclosed*——and her plants, *an orchard, or paradise of pomegranates.* (Cant. iv. 12, 13.) Moreover, it was an emblem of the heavenly state, which is therefore called paradise. (Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 3, 4; Rev. ii. 7.)

Adam was placed in the garden of Eden for the support of his animal life, where grew trees, not only pleasant to the sight, but good for food; and Adam was allowed to eat of all except one. There are two trees particularly mentioned; *the tree of life, in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil;* the former is so call, because with the other trees of the garden, it was a means and perhaps the chief of maintaining Adam's animal life. For notwithstanding his body was gifted with immortality, this it had not from its constitution but from the gift of God; and this was to be continued in the use of means, and by eating of the fruit of this tree especially, though what it was, and its fruit, are not now to be known by us. Not that it had such a virtue in it as to prevent diseases; to which

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Adam's body was not, as yet, subject; nor such as to give and preserve immortality, as Adam vainly thought after he had sinned; which seems to be supposed in Gen. iii. 22, spoken according to his sense of things; but this tree was planted and pointed at, and called by this name, because it was a token that Adam had his natural life from God, the God of his life; and that it depended upon him, and that he might expect the continuance of it so long as he kept his state of integrity. It was also an emblem of Christ, who is, therefore, called the tree of life. (Prov. iii. 18; Rev. ii. 7, and xxii. 2.)

There was another tree called *the tree of knowledge of good and evil;* what that tree was, cannot be known. It is generally thought to have been the apple tree; founded upon a passage in Cant. viii. 5. Others have thought of the fig-tree, because Adam and Eve immediately plucked the leaves of that tree, to cover their naked bodies with. But there is no sufficient foundation for either of these conjectures. It had its name, not from any virtue for ripening the rational powers of man, and of increasing and improving his knowledge, as say the Jews and Socinians, who take Adam to have been but an infant in knowledge,* whereas his knowledge was very great. Nor was it so called from the lie of the serpent: *God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* But this tree had its name before that lie was told, or any temptation was offered to Eve, and was so called, either because God hereby tried and made known, whether Adam

* Vid. Joseph. Antiq. l. i, c. 1. s. 4. Socinum de Stat. prim. hom. c. 4. et Smalcium apud Peltii Harmon. Remonstr. et Socin. art. 6. p. 89.

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would obey his will or no; or eventually, since hereby Adam knew by sad experience what the good was he had lost, and might have enjoyed; and what a bitter and evi. thing sin was, and what evil it had brought on him and his posterity. Otherwise Adam full well knew before, in the theory, the difference between good and evil; but by his fall, or eating of the fruit of this tree, he knew these things practically; to his great grief and distress.

Adam was put into the garden of *Eden to dress it and keep it*, for the culture of it. Yet the work of man in the garden was without toil and fatigue, he did not eat his bread with the sweat of his brow, as after the fall; but his service was attended with the utmost delight and pleasure; nor was it at all dishonorable to him, nor inconsistent with the high, honorable and happy estate in which he was.

What added to the delight and fruitfulness of the garden of Eden, was a river that went out of it to water it; which was parted into four heads or branches, which may be symbols of the Gospel and its doctrines, which like a fountain or river, went forth out of Zion the church, and makes it cheerful and fruitful, or of the everlasting love of God, that pure river of water of life, a river of Eden, or of pleasure.

2. Another providential event, and which shows the care of God over Adam, is providing a help-meet for him, a partner and companion. He cast the man into a deep sleep, and took out a rib from him, and of that made a woman, brought her to him and joined them together in marriage, by which he could propagate his specie and live a social life; which shows that marriage

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is honorable, being instituted in paradise, and not at all inconsistent with the pure state of man in innocence. It was also typical of the marriage of Christ, the second Adam, and his church; and of their mutual union and communion. (Eph. v. 31, 32.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAW GIVEN TO ADAM, AND THE COVENANT MADE WITH HIM IN HIS STATE OF INNOCENCE; IN WHICH HE WAS THE FEDERAL HEAD AND REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS POSTERITY.

God governs rational creatures by a law, as the rule of their obedience; and as he gave a law to angels, which some of them kept, and have been confirmed in a state of obedience to it; and others broke and plunged themselves into destruction and misery; so God gave a law to Adam, which was in the form of a covenant, and in which Adam stood as a covenant head to all his posterity.

1. The law given was both of a natural and positive kind. God, who is the Creator of all, Judge of all the earth, and King of the whole world, has a right to give what laws he pleases to his creatures, and by the ties of gratitude, to observe them. The natural law, or law of nature, given to Adam, was concreated with him, written on his heart, and engraved and imprinted in his nature from the beginning of his existence. By this he was acquainted with the will of his Maker, and directed

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to observe it which appears from the remains of it in the hearts of all men, and from that natural conscience in every one which, if not by some means lulled asleep, that it does not perform its office, excuses men from blame when they do well, and accuses them, and charges them with guilt when they do ill, (Rom. ii. 14, 15,) and likewise from the inscription of this law, in a spiritual and evangelical manner, on regenerate persons, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace: *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.* (Jer. xxxi. 33.) And this law that was written on Adam's heart, and is reinscribed in regeneration, is the same with the Decalogue, as to substance, and is comprised in these two precepts, to which is reduced by Christ: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* This was binding on Adam, and on all his posterity.

Beside this natural law, there were others of a positive kind, which were positive institutions of God, such as man could never have known by the light of nature. Such are those relative to divine worship. That there was a God, and that he was to be worshiped, Adam knew by the light of nature; but how, or in what manner, and with what rites and formalities he would be worshipped, he could only know by divine revelation. The law that forbade the eating of the fruit of a certain tree: *Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat,* was of this kind, and was given as a trial of man's obedience to the will of God. For the evil in the act of eating did not arise from the nature of the tree, and its fruit, which was perhaps as good for food as any tree in the garden; but from its being diso-

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bedience to the will of God. And be it what it may, in which God is disobeyed, it matters not; and by so much the less as that is which is forbidden, by so much is the sin of disobedience, the more aggravated, and the more inexcusable.

2. This law given to Adam, taken in its complex view as both natural and positive, was in the form of a covenant. That it should be both a law and a covenant, is not at all inconsistent. So the law given to the people of Israel from mount Sinai, is also called a covenant. (Exod. xxiv. 7, and Deut. v. 1, 2, 3.) The covenant of grace is called a law, the law of Christ's mediatorship. (Psalm xl. 8.) The law given to Adam, as it was a law sprung from the sovereignty of God, as it was a covenant, it was an act of condescension and goodness in God. He could have required obedience to his law, without promising any thing on its account. If, therefore, God thinks fit, for the encouragement of obedience, to promise in covenant any good, it is condescension, all kindness.

The law given to Adam is expressly called a covenant, as it would seem in Hos. vi. 7, *but they like men*, (or like Adam) *have transgressed the covenant.* Besides, the terms by which the positive law given to Adam is expressed, manifestly imply a covenant; as that if he eat of the forbidden fruit, he should surely die; which implies, that if he abstained from it, he should surely live; which formally constitute a covenant; even a promise and a threatening.

This covenant is by divines called by various names; sometimes a covenant of *friendship*, man being in friendship with God when it was made. Sometimes they call it a covenant of *nature*, it being made with Adam as a

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natural man, and a natural head of his posterity; and as it promised natural blessings to him and his; was coeval with his nature; and was made with all human nature, or with all mankind, in Adam. It is also called a covenant of *innocence;* because made with man in his innocent state; and who, as long as he kept this covenant, continued innocent. And it is frequently called the *legal* covenant, the covenant of *works*, it promised life on the performance of good works; its language was, *Do this and live.* And it sometimes has the name of the covenant of *life* from the promise of life in it; though not in such sense as the covenant with Levi, as a type of Christ, is called, *the covenant of life;* for it is life of a lower kind that was promised to Adam, than what was promised to Christ, for his people.

3. In this, as in all covenants, there are contracting parties. God is one of these parties; of whom it was not unworthy to enter into a covenant with Adam. For if it was not unworthy of God to make a covenant of conversation with Noah; a covenant of circumcision with Abraham; and a covenant of royalty with David; a covenant respecting the kingdom, and the continuance of it in his family; men in a fallen state; then it could not be unworthy of God to make one with Adam in his perfect state.

The other contracting party was Adam; who gave a full and hearty assent to what was proposed The stipulation on the part of God, was proposing and promising good, on condition of obedience. The stipulation, or restipulation on the part of man, was his free and full consent to yield the obedience proposed in expectation of the promise fulfilled. This may be concluded from the law he was to obey being written on his

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heart; which he had full knowledge of, approved of, and assented to; for which he had the most sincere affection; and the inclination and bias of his will were strongly towords it. And as for the positive law, which forbid him to eat of a certain tree; his will was to observe it; his resolution to keep it; as appears from what Eve said to the serpent, tempting her: *God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die*, which shows, that she and her husband believed what God had said; judged it to be reasonable and were determined to observe it. Man had also power to keep this covenant; being made after the image, and in the likeness of God; pure and upright, possessed of a clear understanding of it, a strong affection for it, and a full resolution to keep it. For it was not till sin took place, that the nature of man was weakened, and he became unable to keep the law. But it should be observed, that man was not left to his liberty, it was not at his option, whether he would assent to the proposal in the covenant, and its condition; he had not an alternative given him, to agree or not agree, since obedience was due to God, whether God promised him any thing or not. Wherefore this covenant differs from any covenants among men; in which the parties not only freely agree to make a covenant, but it is at the option of the one, whether he will accept of and agree to the proposal of the other. So that this covenant made with Adam, is not strictly and properly a covenant, but is rather a covenant on one side, as a covenant of promise; and is a covenant of God with man, rather than a covenant of man with God.

4. The law given to Adam, as it had the nature of a

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covenant, contained a promise; which was a promise of life, of natural life to Adam, so long as he should observe the condition; just as life was promised to the Israelites, and a continuance in it, in the land of Canaan, so long as they should observe the law of God; for neither the law of Moses, nor the law of nature, promised any other than a natural life. Some divines think, and indeed it is most generally received, that Adam, continuing in his obedience, had a promise of eternal life. There is, indeed, an ambiguity in the phrase *eternal life;* if no more is meant by it than living for ever in his present life, it will not be denied; but if by it is designed such a state of glory and happiness, as saints shall enjoy in heaven to all eternity; that must be denied for the following reasons:

(1.) Adam's covenant was but a natural covenant; which was made with a natural man, as Adam is called by the apostle, (1 Cor. xv. 46, 47,) and which promised no supernatural blessings, neither grace nor glory——(2.) It was in another covenant earlier than that of Adam's in which eternal life was promised and secured. God, who cannot lie, promised it before the world began; and this promise was put into Christ's hands, even from all eternity; and the blessing itself was secured in him for all for whom it was designed. (Tit. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 1; 1 John v. 10.)——(3.) Eternal life is only through Christ as the Mediator of the covenant of grace; it comes by no other hands than his; it is *throught Christ Jesus our Lord;* he came to open the way that *we might have life, and that more abundantly.*——(4.) If eternal life could have been by Adam's covenant, it would have been by works; for that covenant was a covenant of works;

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and if by works, then not of grace: it would not have been the gift of God, as it is said to be; *The gift of God is eternal life.*——(5.) Life and immortality, or an immortal, eternal life, and the way to it, are only brought to light by the Gospel, (2 Tim. i. 10,) not by the light of nature, nor by the law of Moses; only by the Gospel of Christ.——(6.) There is no proportion between the best works of man, even sinless obedience and eternal life; wherefore, though the threatening of death to Adam contains in it eternal death, it does not follow that the promise of life includes eternal life; since, though eternal death is the just wages and demerit of sin; yet eternal life is not the wages and merit of the works of men; it is the free gift of God. (Rom. vi. 23.)

The sanction of the law and covenant made with Adam, was death: *in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, (Gen. ii. 17,) which includes death corporeal, spiritual or moral, and eternal. A *corporal* death lies in a separation of soul and body; as this was threatened, so the sentence of it was pronounced on the day man eat of the tree: *Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return.* Adam was at once stripped of the immortality of his body, that gift was at once withdrawn from him, and he became a mortal man; the seeds of death took place in him; and he was immediately subject to diseases, disorders and miseries, which issue in death. A spiritual, or rather moral death seized upon him; which lies in a separation of the soul from God, and communion with him; in an alienation from the life of God; in a deformation of the image of God; in a corruption and defilement of the several powers and faculties of the soul; in an impotency and disinclination

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to that which is good; he became dead in trespasses and sins, as are all his posterity. An *eternal* death, lies in a separation of soul and body from God; in a loss of the divine presence, and in a sense of divine wrath; both which are contained in these words, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire;* a symbol of which was th ejection of Adam out of paradise; as eternal life i the gift of God, so eternal death is the wages of sin. (Matt. xxv. 41; Rom. vi. 23.)

5. In this covenant Adam, acted not as a private person for himself only, but as a federal head* and representative of his whole posterity; and in this he was alone; Eve was not a federal head with him, he was alone, before a help-mate was found for him; yet she was included in it, being formed out of him; and all his posterity, who spring from him.

Adam was a figure or type of him that was to come; that is, of Christ. (Rom. v. 14.) Now in what was Adam a type of Christ, but in his being the federal head of his posterity? Not as a man; so all his sons might be; nor on account of his extraordinary production; for though that of both was in an uncommon way yet in a different way; the one was created out of the earth; the other, though not begotten of man, was born of a woman, as other men. But they were both covenant-heads to their respective offspring; and the parallel between them as such, is formed by the apostle in the context of the passage referred to; that as the

* The Jews had a notion of Adam being a head to all mankind; and some think Plato, who borrowed many of his notions from the Jews, gives a hint of it, when he speaks of a corruption, in a head, derived from the first birth, in Timæo, p. 1087. ed. Ficin.

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one, Adam, as a head, conveyed sin and death to all his natural seed; so the other, Christ, as a head, conveyed grace, righteousness and life to all his spiritual offspring. Adam was called the first man, and the first Adam, and described as natural and earthly, in distinction from whom Christ is called the second man, and the last Adam, and described as spiritual, and the Lord from heaven; and these are represented as if the only two men in the world, because the two heads of their respective offspring. The threatening upon the sin of Adam was not on himself only, but on all his succeeding offspring. In him they all died; through his offence death reigned over them, and judgment came upon them all to condemnation, and by his disobedience they were made, accounted and charged as sinners. (Rom. v. 12, 15—19; 1 Cor. xv. 22.) It was no unusual thing with God to make covenants with men, and their posterity, unborn. Thus God made a covenant with Noah, and all that should descend from him, that he would no more destroy the earth with a flood; and with Abraham, and his natural seed, a covenant of circumcision, which should continue till the Messiah came. Nor have any of Adam's posterity reason to complain of such a procedure; since if Adam had stood in his integrity, they they would have partook of all the blessed consequences of his standing, and enjoyed all the happiness that he did. And let it be considered, that since God in his infinite wisdom, thought proper that men should have a head and representative in whose hands their good and happiness should be placed; none could be so fit as the first man; the common parent of mankind, made after the image of God, so wise, so holy, just and good.

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And could it have been possible for all men to have been upon the spot at once, and it had been proposed to them to choose a head and representative for themselves; who would they, who could they have selected but the first man, their natural parent, of whose blood they were made; and who, they might reasonably think, had the most tender affection for them, and would take the greatest care of them, and of their good, put into his hands? To silence all complaints and murmurings, let it be observed, that what God gave to Adam, as a federal head, relating to himself and his posterity, he gave in a way of sovereignty; that is, he might, and might not have given it; it was his own that he gave, and, therefore, might choose whom he pleased in whose hands to deposit it; and who can say to him, What dost thou?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SIN AND FALL OF OUR FIRST PARENTS.

THE law given to our first parents, and the covenant made with them, they soon broke. They continued not long in obedience, and in that state of integrity in which they were created; but sinning, fell from it, into an estate of sin and misery.

1. The persons who sinned were the same to whom the law was given, and with whom the covenant was made; the common parent of mankind, Adam and Eve, first Eve and then Adam; for Eve was first in the trans-

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gression, and then Adam; though Adam was formed first, Eve sinned first. (1 Tim. ii. 13, 14.)

Eve was beguiled and deceived by the old serpent the devil, to eat of the forbidden fruit, by which she sinned and fell from her original state. Her sin may be thought to begin in holding a parley with the serpent; especially on such a subject. She might have suspected that there was some evil design by introducing such a subject of conversation, and by so extraordinary a creature; and, therefore, should have broken off at once, and have abstained from all appearance of evil, from every thing that tended, or might be a leading step to it. Though it may be said in excuse that she took the question put to her, to be a very harmless and innocent one; and to which, in the innocence and integrity of her heart, she gave a plain and honest answer. Some have thought she failed in the account she gave of the law concerning the forbidden tree, both by adding to it, saying, *neither shall ye touch it;* and by diminishing the sense of it, *lest ye die*, or, *lest perhaps ye die;* as if it was a question or doubt with her, whether they should die or no, if they eat of it; whereas, God has said, *Thou shalt surely die.* But she may be defended in this; for though *touching* is not expressed in the prohibition, it is implied; since the fruit could not be plucked from the tree, nor put to the mouth, without touching. Besides, this may be considered as an argument of Eve's from the lesser to the greater, than if they might not so much as touch the fruit, then most certainly not eat of it. And as for the other phrase, *least, or lest perhaps ye die*, this does not always express a doubt but a certainty of the event that would follow. (Psalm ii. 12.) But her

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sin lay in giving credit to what the serpent said, *Ye shall not surely die;* in direct opposition to the word of God, *Thou shalt surely die;* which she now began to doubt and disbelieve. And for the strengthening of this doubt the serpent might take of the fruit, eat of it himself, and not only commend it as most delicious, but observe to her, that she saw with her eyes that no such effect as death, or any symptom of it, followed upon his eating it; and he might further suggest, that that knowledge and wisdom superior to the rest of the creatures which he had was owing to his eating this fruit; and that if she and her husband did but eat of it, they would increase and so improve their knowledge, as to be equal to angels; which he observed was known to God. Now upon all this there arose a lustful inordinate desire of eating the fruit, it being of so lovely an aspect, so good for food, and having such a virtue in it as to make wiser, so that at once there sprung up in her, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:* hence she inwardly sinned, before she eat of the forbidden fruit. Much the same progress may be observed in her sinning, which the apostle James observes of sin in common: *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin,* (James i. 15,) for lust being conceived, she could no longer abstain, but took of the fruit, either from the serpent or from the tree, and eat of it, and so finished her transgression. And not content with eating it herself, but she gave to her husband to eat of it also; who either was with her or if at some distance, to whom she went directly, with some of the fruit in her hand, as may be supposed, and when she came to Adam, held it up to him as most

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lovely to behold, and commended its deliciousness, and no doubt used the same arguments with him that the serpent had made use of with her; and he hearkening to her, eat of it, and sinned also.

That Adam sinned as well as Eve, is most certain; for though it is said, *Adam was not deceived;* the meaning is, that he was not first deceived, that he was not deceived by the serpent, but by his wife; and when she is said to be *in the transgression*, the sense is that she was in the transgression first; but not alone; for we read of Adam's *transgression.* (Rom. v. 14.) And if he was with his wife when she eat of the fruit, as it seems from the letter of the text, (Gen. iii. 6,) he sinned in not attempting to detect the sophistry of the serpent; in not defending his wife from his assults; in not dissuading her, in not warning her of her danger; yea, in not using his conjugal authority, and laying his commands upon her not to eat; for if he was present and silent, he must be criminal and accessary to her sin. Perhaps he was not with her, and his sin lay in *hearkening* to his wife, to her solicitations and requests. And she might urge, that they must be mistaken about the sense of the law; that God never meant by it that they should certainly die for eating the fruit, since she had eaten of it, and was alive and well. By such insinuations Adam was prevailed upon to eat also. Though some think he was not deceived by her; that he knew what he did, and the consequences of it; that he sinned with his eyes open; knowing full well the sense of the law, and what would be the effect; but that he acted in complaisance to his wife, and from a vehement passionate love and affection for her; because he would not

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grieve her; and that she might not die alone, he chose to eat and sin and die with her. But even then this was all very criminal. It was his duty to love his wife, as his own flesh; but then he was not to love her more than God, nor to hearken to her voice more than to the voice of God. However, Adam sinned, and his sin is taken more notice of than the sin of Eve; and it is to his sin that all the sad effects of the fall are imputed; sin and death entered into the world by him. In Adam all died; for he being the federal head of all his posterity, sinned not as a single private person, but as the common head of all mankind. Some have thought, that if Eve only had sinned, and not Adam, her sin would have been personal, and only affected herself, she not being a federal head with Adam. But she could not have been the mother of a sinless posterity; and she must have died for her offence. Indeed God could have created another woman for Adam, had he stood, from whom a holy seed might have sprung. But this is all conjecture; nor is it so clear a point that Eve had no concern in federal head-ship; since though the law was given to Adam, and the covenant was made with him before she was formed; yet it was made known to her, and she assented to it, and shared in the same privileges with Adam, particularly in having dominion over the creatures; and she was, as he, the common parent of their posterity, the mother of all living; was one flesh with him, and both the one Adam, (Gen. v. 2,) the head of all mankind.

2. How creatures, so wise, holy, just and good; made after the image and likeness of God, came to sin as they did deserves an inquiry. To what could their sin and

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fall be owing? Not to God; he is not the author of sin, nor does he tempt to it; nor to Satan except as an instrument, enticing and deceiving, but to themselves, to their own will—it was their own act and deed.

God foreknew the sin and fall of Adam; as he foreknows all things that come to pass in this world; wherefore he predetermined the fall of Adam. This fell under his decree, as do all things that come to pass. *Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass,* when *the Lord commandeth it not?* (Lam. iii. 37.) That the fall of Adam was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God is certain; because the sufferings and death of Christ, by which is the redemption of men from that sin, and all others, were ordained before the foundation of the world; and must have been precarious and uncertain, if Adam's fall was not by a like decree. (Acts ii. 23, and iv. 28; 1 Pet. i. 20.) But then neither the foreknowledge of God, nor any decree of God, laid Adam under a necessity of sinning; it is true, there arises from hence a necessity of immutability, that is, that the things God has decreed should unchangeably come to pass, but not a necessity of co-action or force. As Judas and the Jews sinned freely, the one in betraying, the other in putting Christ to death; so Adam sinned freely, without force or compulsion, notwithstanding any decree of God concerning him. God permitted or suffered Adam to sin and fall, not by a bare permission as an idle spectator, the permission was voluntary, wise, holy, powerful and efficacious, according to the unchangeable counsel of his will. In different senses he willed, and did not will the sin of Adam. He did not will it as an evil, but as what he would overrule for

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good, a great good. He willed it not as sin, but as a means of glorifying his grace, mercy, justice and holiness. And that this was not a bare and inefficacious permission, but attended with influence, is clear; because here was a concourse of divine providence attending this action, and influencing it as an action, without which it could never have been performed. As divine providence supports every wicked man in his being throughout the whole course of his vicious life, the same providence upheld Adam in his being, whilst he was eating the forbidden fruit. The influences of divine providence concur with every action, as an action, since all live and move, and have their being in God; but the obliquity, irregularity and sinfulness of the action, is from the creature.

Satan accomplished his part not by force or compulsion, but by persuasion. He acted the part of a tempter, and from thence he has that appellation. (Matt. iv. 3; 1 Thess. iii. 5.) He enticed and seduced by lies and false reasonings, and so prevailed; he is said to beguile Eve, and to deceive the whole world in its representatives. (2 Cor. xi. 3; Rev. xii. 9.) He made use of a serpent, and not a mere assumed form and appearance of one, as is clear from its being reckoned one of the beasts of the field, and said to be more subtil than the rest, and from the curse denounced, that it should go on its belly and eat dust all its days. And yet it was not merely a serpent, or a serpent only, but Satan in it; as appears not only from its having the faculty of speech, which such creatures have not; but from its being possessed of reasoning powers, capable of forming an artful scheme, of conducting it and carrying it into execution; and from the seduction and

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ruin of men being ascribed to the old serpent the devil. (John viii. 44; 2 Cor. xi. 3; Rev. xii. 9.)

Satan showed great craftiness and cunning throughout this whole affair, as in making use of the serpent, the most subtil of all creatures, which could easily creep into the garden unobserved, and was lovely and beautiful in appearance. Satan's cunning also appeared in going to work with our first parents so early, as soon as they were well settled in their state of happiness, when they had but just tasted of its pleasures and before the habits of virtue and goodness were strengthened. Nor did he discover himself in his true character. Had he declared himself to be an apostate spirit, the woman would have fled from him at once, with the utmost abhorrence and detestation which would have marred his scheme at once. But he begun, seemingly with acknowledging the authority of God; that he had power to forbid the use of any of the trees of the garden; and only questioned whether he had done so. Could a God so good and particulary to Adam and Eve, ever restrain them from eating the fruit of any of the trees? And especially he would never inflict death upon them for so slight a matter. They must surely have misunderstood him, and mistaken his meaning. The woman began to doubt whether God had so commanded; or, however, that her husband had mistook his meaning, and had made a wrong report of it to her, who was not present when the law was given. Satan perceiving that he had gained ground, boldly affirmed, that though they eat, they should not die; and that God knew that such was the virtue of the fruit of that tree, that it would make them wiser and more knowing, even as God, or at least as the angels of God. The woman finding by this that there

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were an order of creatures superior to them in knowledge, and attracted the lovely sight of the fruit, took of it and eat, and prevailed upon her husband to do so likewise. And thus they sinned and fell, not through any force and compulsion, but through the temptation of Satan.

Wherefore, the sin, fall and ruin of man were his own work. It was not through ignorance and want of knowledge. He was created after the image of God, one part of which lay in wisdom and knowledge. He had no darkness, blindness, nor hardness of heart; he knew God, his Creator and Benefactor; he knew his will, he knew his law, and what would be the consequence of disobedience to it. Yet he was not so perfect but that he might be imposed upon by the appearance of a false good, presented to his understanding, which his will made choice of, under a show of good. Nor was it through a defficiency of natural holiness; for *God made man upright*, endued him with rectitude and holiness of nature, with a bias to that which is good, and with an aversion to that which is evil; but as he was made mutable, which he could not otherwise be, he was left to the mutability of his will, and so sinned and fell. Should it be said, Why did God make man mutable? it might as well be asked, Why did he not make him God? for immutability, in a strict sense, is peculiar to God. Should the question be altered, Why did not he confirm him in the state in which he was created, as he confirmed the elect angels? it may be replied, That it is not improbable but that he would have confirmed him, had he continued a little longer in his state of probation. But the best answer is, that it did not so seem good in his sight.

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CHAPTER IX

THE NATURE, AGGRAVATIONS AND SAD EFFECTS OF THE SIN OF MAN.

I. *The Nature of this Sin.*

It seems to have occured through inadvertency and thoughtlessness. It began with doubting and unbelief, and appeared in an ordinate desire after the forbidden fruit; in an unlawful curiosity of knowing more, and in pride, affecting to be as God, or at least to be upon an equality with angels.

The nature of it may be learnt in some measure from the appellations given. It is called *sin*, *the sin*, *the grand sin*, the first and fountain of all other sin among men. (Rom v. 12.) It is called a *transgression*, a transgression of the law, and a transgression of the covenant. It is called *disobedience*, (Rom. v. 19,) disobedience to the will of God and to his law; and as obedience to God is well pleasing to him, so disobedience in any case, is highly resented. It is often called the *offence*, (Rom. v. 15, 17, 18, 20;) it being in its nature, and in all its circumstances, very offensive to God, and abominable in his sight. And in the last-mentioned places the word used signifies a *fall;* and hence it is common with us to call this sin the *fall of Adam;* it being that by which he fell from a state of integrity, honor and happiness, into an estate of sin and misery.

II. *The Aggravations of this Sin*

Were, the place where, and the time when it was committed, with other circumstances.

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It was committed in the garden of Eden. Here man was put when he was formed; nor was he cast out of it till after he had sinned. Here were all manner of trees for his use; and he was allowed to eat of all except one, and a disregard of that prohibition was great ingratitude to his Creator and Benefactor, who had so richly provided for him. Had it been in a remote part of the world, or in a desert, where this tree grew, and where scarcely anything else was to be had, it would in some measure have extenuated the crime; but in a plentiful garden, it was a very aggravated crime.

The time when it was committed; that is, how long after the creation of our first parents, cannot be precisely determined. Some think that the first Adam kept his state of integrity as long as the second Adam lived here on earth; but this is without any foundation. Others are of opinion that he fell of the same day he was created; but the text on which it is founded will not support it, (Psalm xlix. 12,) since it speaks not of the first man, but of his sons, and those in honor, whose continuance in it is not long: and the word for *abideth* or *lodgeth*, as some choose to render it, often signifies a longer duration than a night's lodging. However, it must be very early that man fell, since the account of his fall is very closely connected with what was done on the first day of his creation; and Satan is said to be a *murderer*, that is, a distroyer of mankind *from the beginning*. (John viii. 44.) Now this was an aggravation of Adam's sin, that he should be guilty of it so soon, having just received his being from God; placed in so happy a situation; and blessed with so much honor, power and authority, and with so many indulgent favors.

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The sin of Adam was a complicated one; he sinned against light and knowledge, and when he was in full power to have resisted the temptation; he could neither plead ignorance nor weakness in excuse; it was the height of ingratitude to his Maker; it was affronting him in the highest degree, by disbelieving his word, and thereby making him a liar; it was intolerable pride, and affectation of deity, or of equality to God; a want of thought, of care, concern and affection for his posterity, with whose all he was intrusted. In short, it included all sin in it. For the laws of God are so connected together, that he that *offends in one point is guilty of all.* (James ii. 10.)

Some have labored to make it appear, that Adam by his sin transgressed the whole Decalogue, or the law of the ten commandments. Dr. Lightfoot* expresses it thus, "Adam, at one clap, breaks both the tables, and all the commandments.——1. He chose him another God, when he followed the devil.——2. He idolized and deified his own belly, as the apostles phrase is; his belly he made his God.——3. He took the name of God in vain, when he believed him not.——4. He kept not the rest and estate wherein God had set him.——5. He dishonored his Father which was in heaven; wherefore his days were not long in that land which the Lord his God has given him.——6. He massacred himself and all his posterity.——7. In eyes and mind he committed spiritual fornication.——8. He stole that (like Achan) which God had set aside not to be meddled with; and this his stealth is that which troubles all Israel, the whole world.——9. He bore witness against

* Works, vol. i. p. 1027, 1028.

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God when he believed the witness of the devil above him. ——10. He coveted an evil covetousness, which cost him his life, and all his progeny."

III. *The Sad Effect and Consequences of this Sin.*

The account of what befel Adam after his fall, is short, and he was so quickly recovered by the grace of God, brought to repentance for his sin, and had a better image restored to him than what he had lost; and received so early the revelation of a Saviour that the mischiefs that personally accrued to him, are not so manifest; but appear more clearly in his posterity.

Adam lost his original righteousness. God made man upright; but sinning, he lost the uprightness and rectitude of his nature; or the righteousnesss in which he was created; so that he became unrighteous, nay, full of all unrighteousness; and hence it is that there is none of his posterity righteous, no not one. Now this was signified by the nakedness of our first parents, which they immediately perceived after their fall; though it primarily respects the nakedness of their bodies, which before the fall, was no occasion of shame to them; but became so afterwards. The reason of this was because of the loss of their inward clothing, the righteousness and holiness of their nature; the want of which the nakedness of their bodies was now an emblem to them of. And as Adam immediately betook himself to get something to cover himself with, so natural it is for men to seek to obtain a righteousness of their own, to cover their naked souls. For to be self-righteous is as natural to man as to be sinful; and what men do attain to as a righteousness by their

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own works, is of no more avail than Adam's figleaves were to him; cannot cover a man from the sight of divine Justice, nor shelter him from the stormy winds of divine wrath and vengeance; nor justifiy him in the sight of God; nor entitle him to heaven and happiness.

Guilt on the consciences of our first parents presently appeared, and that in an endeavor to hide themselves from the presence of God among the trees of the garden. Guilt is the consequence of sin in all. The whole world of Adam's posterity is guilty before God; and nothing can remove the guilt but the blood of Christ. And from this consciousness of guilt, flow shame, fear and hiding themselves from God. They were ashamed to appear before him. And causes shame in every one, more or less, unless hardened, stupified and past all sense. Hence men choose to commit sin in secret, in the darkness, that their sins may not be seen; nor do they wish to come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. Fear followed upon a consciousness of guilt in Adam: *I was afraid because I was naked;* as there is in every man, more or less a fearful looking for of judgment and indignation. Through guilt, shame and fear, Adam hid himself, but to no purpose. There is no fleeing from the presence of God, to whom the darkness and the light are both alike. Of what avail could the shade cast by the trees in the garden be to Adam, to hide him from the all-seeing eye of God? and yet such a notion possesses his posterity. (Amos ix. 2, 3; Rev vi. 15, 16, 17.)

Loss of knowledge and understanding were soon perceived. Instead of gaining the knowledge he unlaw-

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fully sought after, he lost much of what he had; hence he is ironically and sarcastically upbraided: *Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil!* and his posterity are represented as foolish, ignorant and devoid of understanding: *There is none that understandeth.* (Rom. iii. 11.)

Our first parents, upon sinning, were immediately obnoxious to the curse of the law, and it was pronounced on them. Though it is expressed as if it only concerned the body, and temporal things; in which strain run the several curses of the law afterwards; *Cursed shalt thou be in the city,* &c. (Gen. iii. 16—19; Deut. xxviii. 15, 18,) yet it extends further, even to the wrath of God on the soul, both here and hereafter For the curse of the law is no other than the sanction of it, *death;* and which, as has been seen, is corporal, spiritual or moral, and eternal. Adam, upon sinning, was at once stripped of the immortality of his body, which God had bestowed upon it and became mortal. *In Adam all die;* and a spiritual or moral death seized on all the powers and faculties of his soul; his understanding became darkened; his mind and conscience defiled; his affections inordinate; his will biassed to that which is evil, and to every good work lifeless and reprobate, until restored by the grace of God; as every man is dead in trespasses and sins, until quickened.

Ejection out of paradise is another event which followed on the sin of Adam; *So he drove out the man,* (Gen. iii. 24,)—an emblem of that alienation from God, from the life of God, and communion with him, which sin has produced, and which has set man at a distance

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from God. Hence Christ suffered to bring his people near unto him; and by his blood they that were afar off were made nigh unto God. And besides these.

Other effects of the sin and fall of Adam are a general corruption and depravity of all the powers and faculties of the soul, and of all the members of the body yielded as instruments of unrighteousness; a propensity and proneness to all that is sinful and an inordinate desire after the lusts of the flesh. There is, moreover, a disinclination to all that is good, an aversion to it; the carnal mind is emnity itself to God, and all that is good; and there is also an impotency, an inability to do that which is good. Hence man is represented as without strength, having lost it, and become unable to do anything that is spiritually good; to which may be added, that sin has brought man into a state of slavery to sin, Satan and the world; this is what we commonly call the corruption and depravity of nature, the effect of the first sin of Adam. This is the *pandora* from whence have sprung all spiritual maladies and bodily diseases; all the disasters, distresses, mischiefs and calamities, that are, or have been in the world.

CHAPTER X.

THE IMPUTATION OF ADAM'S SIN TO ALL HIS POSTERITY.

HAVING considered the disobedience of our first parents, and *its dreadful* effects to themselves, we next consider how it concerns their posterity. The great consequences are two, the imputation of the guilt of it

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to them, and the corruption of nature derived to them from it.

The first, which is previous to and the foundation of the other, is expressed in very strong terms, (Rom. v. 19,) *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* The apostle is here treating upon the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ; and as it might be a difficulty in the minds of some, how any one could be justified by the righteousness of another; and as he had to do much with Jews as well as Gentiles; the former of which might better understand the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, than the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness; he observes, it is as easy to conceive how men may be made righteous by the obedience of another, namely, through the imputation of that obedience to them, as it is to conceive how all men are made sinners by the disobedience of one man, even through the imputation of that disobedience to them. To place this doctrine in the best light.——(1.) We may observe the act of disobedience, by which men are made sinners.——(2.) Who they are that are made sinners.——(3.) In what sense they are *made* so.

I. *The Act of Disobedience; Whose and What It Is.*

(1.) Whose it is: it is sometimes expressed by *one that sinned;* and more than once called, the *offence of one,* (Rom. v. 15, 16, 18,) and yet more clearly: *By one man sin entered;* and is called, *one man's offence,* and *one man's disobedience,* for it is not the sin of one of the apostate spirits, by which men are made sinners; but

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the sin of one of their own species, one of the same nature, even the common parent of all mankind, and who is expressed by name, where this offence and disobedience is called the *transgression of Adam!* But then this is to be understood of Adam not to the exclusion of Eve, who was also in the transgression, and first in it, and was the mother of all living. They both have the same common name, *man;* the same proper name, Adam; were of the same nature; had the same law given them; the same covenant made with them; were both guilty of the same act of disobedience; and had a sentence of punishment pronounced on them. (2.) What this disobedience was: which appears from what has been already advanced. It was disobedience to the law and will of God, in eating the fruit which he had forbidden. Now it was this one act of disobedience, by which Adam's posterity were made sinners; and therefore is sometimes called the *one* sin, and the *one* offence. It was a single sin, and the first sin committed in our world; and that which was first committed by Adam, and not any of his after sins. It is the one, and the only one that was committed by him, while he stood the federal-head of his posterity. No sooner had Adam committed this first sin, by which the covenant with him was broken, but he ceased to be a covenant-head. The law given him, as a covenant of works, was no more so, and he was no more in a capacity of yielding sinless obedience; and so could not procure life for himself and his. Wherefore, no longer standing as a federal-head to his posterity, they had no more concern with his after-sins, than with his repentance and good works, both of which, no doubt, were performed by him; yet by his repentance they are

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not reckoned repenting sinners; nor are his good works accounted to them.

2. Those made sinners by the disobedience of Adam are said to be *many;* not only Adam and Eve, but even all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation, were made sinners hereby. For though they are only said to be *many* these many signify *all;* and the reason of the use of this word, is to answer to the next clause, to the *many* that are *made righteous by the obedience of one Man;* and yet the *many* there, signify all that are in Christ, as their covenant-head; even all his spiritual seed and offspring. And so all the natural seed and offspring of Adam, to whom he stood as a federal-head, are made sinners by his disobedience; which is thus strongly expressed: *As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that* or *in whom all have sinned.* (Rom. v. 12.) And again, *By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.*

3. Adam's posterity are *made* sinners by his disobedience, not by imitation, as say the Pelagians. Men may become more sinful by imitation, but they do not first become sinful by it. Men may, by example, be drawn in to commit more and greater sin; and therefore the company of wicked men is to be shunned, since *Evil communications corrupt good manners.* But this cannot be the case here; for death, the effect of Adam's sin, and the punishment inflicted for it, takes place on those who never *sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,* (Rom. v. 14,) namely, infants dying in their infancy, who, though not without the corruption of nature in them, are yet without any actual sin com-

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mitted. Now since death, which is the punishment of sin, takes place on them, it supposes guilt, or otherwise punishment could not in justice be inflicted on them; and as they are not made sinners by Adam's sin, through imitation of it, they must become guilty, or be made sinners in some other way. Those who never heard of Adam's sin cannot be made sinners by it, through imitation of it; and *death passes upon all men*, all nations of the world, and all individuals in it. This sense makes a man no more a sinner by Adam's disobedience than he is by the disobedience of his immediate parents, or any other whose ill examples he follows Adam seems to be too remote an ancestor to imitate.

Nor is the sense of the phrase, "made sinners by one man's disobedience," what the more modern Pelagians and Arminians hold to; that by a metonymy of the effect, sin being put for the punishment of it, men become sufferers, or are obnoxious to death and suffer death on the account of Adam's disobedience; for this is to depart from the common and constant sense of the word, *sinners*. Nor can any instance be given of the apostle's use of the word in this sense, either in the context or elsewhere. It is contrary to the apostle's scope and design in the context, which was to show how death came into the world, namely, by sin; and to the distinction he all along makes between sin and death. Besides, it is granting us too much for themselves; it makes their cause indefensible, and even destroys it; for if men are obnoxious to death, even though but a corporal death, and suffer such a death on the account of Adam's sin, they must be, in some way or other, guilty of it; or such a punishment, in justice, could not be inflicted.

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What greater punishment is there among men, for the most enormous crime, than death? And why should men suffer death for Adam's, of which they are in no sense guilty?

Nor is it the sense of the phrase, that Adam's posterity derive a corrupt nature from him, through his sin. This is, indeed, a truth, but not the truth of this passage. Every man is conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, as was David; but there is a difference between being *made* sinners, and *becoming* sinful; the one respects the guilt, the other the pollution of nature; the one is previous to the other, and the foundation of it; men receive a corrupt nature from their immediate parents; but they are not made sinners by any act or acts of their disobedience. Wherefore,

It remains that the posterity of Adam are only *made* sinners through the imputation to them of his disobedience. And this imputation is not to be considered in a *moral* sense, as the action of a man committed by himself, whether good or bad, is adjudged and reckoned to him as his own. The zealous good work of Phinehas in slaying two persons in the very act of sin, was *counted unto him for righteousness;* that is, was judged, reckoned and esteemed a righteous, worthy and commendable action; but in a *forensic*, judicial and law-sense; as when one man's debts are in a legal way placed to the account of another, as if they were his, though not personally contracted by him. And thus the posterity of Adam are made sinners by Adam's disobedience, that being imputed to them, and put to their account, as if it had been committed by them personally, though it was not. And this sense is confirmed and illustrated,——(1.) From the signification of the word here used, *katesathesan*

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constituted in a judicial way, ordered and appointed in the dispensation of things, that so it should be; just as Christ was made sin, or a sinner by imputation, by the constitution of God, laying upon him, reckoning, placing to his account the sins of all his people, and dealing with him as though he was the guilty person, and as if he had committed the sins, though he had not; and not imputing trespasses to them, though they were the actual transgressors.——(2.) From its being the disobedience of another, by which men are made sinners; and therefore they can in no other way be made sinners by it, than by the imputation of it to them; just as the righteousness of Christ being not our own, but his, another's; we cannot be made righteous by it, but by the imputation of it to us.——(3.) From the punishment inflicted on persons for it. The punishment threatened to Adam in case of disobedience to the law and will of God, was death, which includes corporal, moral and eternal death; a corporal death is allowed to be suffered on account of the sin of Adam; and if so there must be guilt; and that guilt must be made over to the sufferer; and which can be done in no other way than by the imputation of it. A moral death is no other than the loss of the image of God in man: in the room of which succeeded unrighteousness and unholiness; and is both a sin, and a punishment for sin. It is a sin as it has malignity in it, and is a punishment for sin; for which there can be no other foundation but the imputation of Adam's disobedience. Nor can any thing else vindicate the righteousness of God; for if the law of nature was sufficient, why should this original taint infect men, rather than the sins of immediate parents? Now if this comes upon men as a

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punishment, it supposes preceding sin; and what can that be but Adam's disobedience, the guilt of which must be made over to Adam's posterity, or it could not in justice take place. And if eternal death is included in the punishment, as it must be, this can never be inflicted on guiltless persons; if men are thus punished for Adam's sin, the guilt of that sin must be imputed to them. In Rom. v. 18, it is said, *By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;* that is, the righteous sentence of God passed upon the whole posterity of Adam, to the condemnation of them for his offence; be that condemnation to a corporal, or to a moral, or to an eternal death, to any or all of them, it supposes them guilty of that offence, and that the guilt of that offence is made over to them, and reckoned as theirs.——(4.) That this is the sense of the clause, *made sinners by the disobedience of one*, appears from the opposite clause: *So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* Now the many ordained to eternal life, for whom Christ died, and whom he justified, are made righteous, or are justified only through the imputation of his righteousness to them; and he is made sin by the imputation of their sins to him. (2 Cor. v. 21.) In like manner are Adam's posterity, or all men, made sinners through the imputation of his disobedience to them. And this is the sense of this clause, notwithstanding what may be objected to it.

It is no objection, that Adam's disobedience or sin is not now in act. The same may be objected to the obedience of Christ. Nor is it any objection to this truth, that Adam's posterity were not in being when his disobedience was committed, and so could have no concern in it: for though they had not an actual being, yet they

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had a virtual and representative one. They were in him both seminally and federally, (Rom. v. 12,) as Levi was in the loins of Abraham, and paid tithes to Melchizedek. (Heb. vii. 9, 10) Their being in him seminally is the foundation of their being in him federally. This may be greatly illustrated and confirmed by modern philosophy, according to which all individuals of plants of the same sort to be produced in all following ages, were actually formed in the first seed that was created; and all the *stamina* and *semina*, not only of plants but of animals, were originally formed by the almighty Parent, within the first of each respective kind, to be the seed of all future generation*. Nor does this act of imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, make God the author of sin; since this act makes men sinners not inherently, but imputatively; it puts no sin in them, though it reckons sin to them; and though this imputation is God's act, it makes him no more the author of sin, than the imputation of Christ's obedience, makes God the author of that obedience. Nor is this doctrine chargeable with cruelty and injustice. It has not been reckoned unjust that children should suffer for the sins of their parents; or rather, that parents should be punished in their children. God describes himself as a God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him; and yet it is impossible that he should be guilty either of a cruel or unjust action. When Achan sinned, his sons and his daughters, were all burnt with him. For

* See the Philosophical Transactions abridged, vol. ii. p. 912. Nieuwentyt's Religious Philosopher, vol. ii. contempl. 23. s. 13. p. 711. ed. 5. Wolaston's Religion of Nature, s. 5. p. 160, 164. ed. 8.

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the injury the Amalekites, did to Israel, when they first came out of Egypt, Saul had orders, some hundreds of years afterwards to go and smite them, and utterly destroy all they had, men and women, infants and sucklings. The blood of all the righteous persons that had been shed from the beginning of the world to the times of Christ, was then avenged on the wicked Jews. And such a procedure in subjecting children to penalties for the sins of ther parents, is justified by the laws, and usages of nations, who make treason punishable in the posterity of men. A nobleman, when he commits treason, against his sovereign, is not only stripped of his titles, honor and estates himself, but his children are also reduced to poverty and misery, until the attainder is removed.

The ground of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, is not his being the natural head, and common parent of them; for so are immediate parents to their respective offspring; but their particular sins are not imputed to them. Adam being the common parent of mankind, may be considered as the ground of the derivation of a corrupt nature to them; and yet the justice of that will not clearly appear without their being considered as made sinners by the imputation of Adam's sin. But the ground of this imputation is the federal headship of Adam, or his standing as a covenant-head to all his posterity; so that what he did as such, is reckoned as if done by them.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE.

B· the corruption of nature is meant, the general depravity of mankind, of all the individuals of human nature, and of all the powers and faculties of the soul, and members of the body.

1. There is such a depravity and corruption of mankind.

The heathen themselves have acknowledged and lamented it; they assert, that no man is born without sin;* that every man is naturally vicious;† that there is an evil disposition, or vicious affection, implanted in men;‡ and that there is a fatal portion of evil in all when born, from whence are the depravity of the soul, diseases, &c.§ and that the cause of viciosity is rather from our parents, and from first principles, than from ourselves.‖ Cicero¶ particularly laments that men should be brought into life by nature as a stepmother, with a naked, frail and infirm body, and with a mind or soul prone to lusts. Revelation asserts it.

The Scriptures abound with testimonies of it, affirming that no man can be born pure and clean; that

* Plato, Definitiones.—Horat. Satyr, l. 1. satyr 3. v. 68.

† Unicuique dedit vitium natura creata, Propert. l. 2. eleg. 22 ver. 17.

‡ Laertius, l. 2. in vita Aristippi.

§ Plutarch, de Consol. ad Apoll. vol. 2. p. 104

‖ Timæus Locrus de Natura Mundi, p. 21.

¶ De Republica, l. 3. apud August. contr. Julian l. 4. c. 12.

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whatever is born of the flesh, or comes into the world by ordinary generation, is flesh, carnal and corrupt; that all men, Jews and Gentiles, are under sin, under the guilt, pollution and dominion of sin; that the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil, and that continually; that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked; that out of it proceeds all that is vile and sinful. (Job xix. 4; John iii. 6; Rom. iii. 9; Gen. vi. 5; Jer. xvii. 9; Matt. xv. 19.) Reason confirms it. If a tree is corrupt, it can bring forth no other than corrupt fruit. If the root of mankind is unholy, the branches must be so too. If the fountain is impure, the streams must be so likewise. If immediate parents are unclean, their posterity must be unclean, as a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean; and if God has made of one man's blood all nations that are upon the face of the earth, and that blood is tainted with sin, all that proceed from him by ordinary generation must have the same taint. All experience testifies the truth of this. No man was ever born into the world without sin; no one has ever been exempt from this contagion and defilement of nature, *there is none that doeth good, no not one*, (Rom. 3. 10,) who does good naturally and of himself. Of all the millions who have proceeded from Adam by ordinary generation, not one has been found without sin; but one individual of human nature can be mentioned as an exception to this, which is the human nature of Christ, and that is excepted because of its wonderful production, not having descended from Adam by ordinary generation.

2. The terms by which this corruption of nature is expressed in Scripture deserve notice, since they not only

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serve to give more light concerning its nature, but also to confirm it. It is often called *sin* itself, being a want of conformity of the law of God, and contrary to it. It is represented as very active, working all manner of concupiscence, and death itself; deceiving, slaying, killing and as exceeding sinful even to an hyperbole, being big with all sin, and the source of all. (Rom. vii. 8, 11, 13.) It has the name of *indwelling sin;* the apostle speaks of it as such with respect to himself, *it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* (Rom. vii. 17, 20.) It does not come and go as a visitor now and then, but is an inhabitant. It is like the spreading leprosy in the house, which was not to be cured until the house was pulled down and the stones and timber carried into an unclean place; and so the tabernacle of the body will not be rid of the corruption of nature, until it is taken down and carried to the grave. It is said to be the *law of sin*, and a *law in the members;* which has force, power and authority. It reigns like a king; yea, rather a tyrant; for it reigns unto death, unless grace prevents. It is called the *body of sin*, because it consists of various parts and members, as a body; it is an aggregate, or an assemblage of sins, and includes all. (Rom. vi. 6; Col. iii. 5.) Sometimes it goes by the name of the *old man*, because it is the effect of the poison of the old serpent; it is nearly as old as the first man; and is as old as every man in whom it is. Very often it is called *flesh*, because it is propagated by the flesh, is carnal and corrupt, and opposed to the spirit or principle of grace. (John iii. 6; Gal. v. 17; Rom. vii. 18, 25.) It is named *lust*, or *concupiscence;* which is sin itself, and the mother of all sin; it consists of various branches, called fleshly

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lusts, and worldly lusts, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (Rom. vii. 7; James i. 15; 1 John ii. 15.) The Jews commonly call it the evil figment, or imagination.

3. This corruption of nature is universal. Our first parents were, and all descending from them by ordinary generation are tainted with it. Their immediate offspring took the contagion from them. The first man born into the world, Cain, shed his brother's blood. In the room of Abel, whom Cain slew, God raised up another seed to Adam, whom he begot in his own likeness, after his image; not in the likeness and image of God, in which Adam was created; but in that which he had brought upon himself, through his sin and fall. The posterity of this man, and of Cain, peopled and filled the whole world before the flood. And what is the account given of them? It is this: that the earth was corrupt through them; that all flesh had corrupted his way on the earth; and that only one man found grace in the sight of God; and that the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually. And as for the inhabitants of the new world, who sprung from Noah and his three sons, who descended in a right line from Seth, much the same is said of them. (Gen. viii. 21.) In short, all nations of the earth are under sin, under its guilt and pollution. Yea, this depravity and corruption of nature has appeared, not only among the men of the world in all ages, but even among the people of God, and after they have been called by grace. There never was a just man that did good, and sinned not; in many things, in all things they sin and offend; in them, that is, in their flesh, their corrupt part, no good thing dwells. Those who say they

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have no sin, deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them.

This corruption of nature is general, in regard to the powers and faculties of the soul, and the members of the body. The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. The mind and conscience, are defiled; and the understanding is darkened through the blindness and ignorance that is in it; so that a mere natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God. The carnal mind is enmity to God, is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be, without his grace. The affections are inordinate, run in a wrong channel, and are fixed on wrong objects. Men hate what they should love, and love what they should hate. In short, there is no place clean, no part free from the pollution and influence of sin All the members of the body are defiled. The tongue is a little member, is a world of iniquity itself, and defiles the whole body. The several members are used as instruments of unrighteousness, of which several are particularly mentioned in the general account of man's depravity, (Rom. iii,) as the throat, lips, mouth, and feet, all employed in the service of sin.

4. The inquiry next arises as to the way and manner in which the corruption of nature is conveyed to men, so that they become sinful by it. It cannot be of God, or by infusion from him. He is of purer eyes than to behold it; he has no pleasure in it; it is abominable to him, and therefore he would never infuse and implant it in the nature of men. Nor can it be by imitation of parents, either first or immediate; there are some who never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, and yet die; which they would not, were they not guilty and polluted. There are many

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born into the world who never knew their immediate parents, and therefore could not imitate them. Nor does this come to pass through souls having been in a pre-existent state. Some of the heathen philosophers, as Pythagoras and Plato, held a pre-existence of souls before the world was; which notion was adopted by Origen, who believed that souls in this pre-existent state sinned each seperately for themselves, and for their sins were thrust in time into human bodies, in which they suffer. And some modern Christians have imbibed the same heathenish and Jewish notions.* Observing that some passages of Scripture speak of the pre-existence of Christ, in his divine nature, or as a divine Person; they have interpreted them of the pre-existence of his human soul; and then have proceeded to assert the pre-existence of all souls, but without any color of reason or Scripture authority.

Nor is this to be accounted for by the traduction of the soul from immediate parents; or by the generation of it, together with the body, from them. Could this, indeed, be established, it would greatly remove the difficulty which attends the doctrine of the propagation of the corruption of nature by natural generation. Hence Austin was once inclined to it on this account. But it is so big with absurdities, as has been seen in a preceeding chapter, that it cannot be admitted. If Spirit is educed out of matter, and generated from it, it must therefore be material, corruptible, and mortal; for what-

[* "By supposing the pre-existent sin and fall of man, the most radical views of human depravity can be harmonized with the highest views of the justice and honor of God."—*The Conflict of Ages, by Edward Beecher, Boston*, 1855.—EDITOR]

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ever is generated is corruptable, and not immortal. And, besides, according to the Scriptures, the soul is immediately created by God. (Zech. xii. 1; Heb. xii. 9.) That this corruption of nature is conveyed by generation, seems certain; (Job xiv. 4. John iii. 6. Eph. ii. 3,) for since nature is conveyed in that way, the sin of nature also must come in like manner. But how to account for this, consistent with the justice, holiness, and goodness of God, is a difficulty, and is one of the greatest difficulties in the whole scheme of divine truths; wherefore some have thought it more advisable to sit down and lament this corruption, and consider how we must be delivered from it, than to inquire curiously in what way and manner it comes into us; as a man who has fallen into a pit, does not so much concern himself how he got into it, as how to get out of it. But a sober inquiry into this matter, with a due regard to the perfections of God, the sacred Scriptures, and the analogy of faith, may be both lawful and laudable. The difficulty is chiefly occasioned by the manner in which the case is put; as, that a soul coming pure and holy out of the hand of God, should be united to a sinful body, and be defiled by it. But if it can be shown that neither of these is the fact, that the body is not properly and formally sinful, when the soul is first united to it, nor the soul pure and holy when created by God; that is, not in such sense as was the soul of Adam when created; the difficulty will be greatly lessened, if not entirely removed.

Let it be observed, then, that the contagion of sin does not take place on the body apart, nor on the soul apart; but upon both when united together, and not before. It was not the body apart in the substance of

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Adam's flesh that sinned; nor was the soul apart represented by him; but both as in union, and as one man, one person. For not bodies and souls separately, but men sinned in Adam. And so as the imputation of the guilt of his sin is not made to the body apart, nor to the soul apart, but to both as united when it becomes a son of Adam, a member of him; so the corruption of nature, derived from him, takes place on neither apart, but upon them as united together, and constituted man. The body, antecedent to its union to a rational soul, is only a brute, an animal, like other animals; and is not a subject either of moral good or moral evil. But when this body comes to be united to a rational soul, it becomes then a part of a rational creature, it comes under a law, and its nature not being conformable to that law, its nature, and the evils and viciosities of it, are formally sinful. It has before a disposition, an aptitude to what is sinful; and contains fit fuel for sin, which its vicious lusts and appetites kindle, when these become formally sinful, through its becoming a part of a rational creature; and these increasing, operate upon and gradually defile the soul. Should it be said, that matter cannot operate on spirit; this may be sooner said than proved. How easy is it to observe, that when our bodies are indisposed through diseases and pain, our minds are affected. From the temperament and constitution of the body many disadvantages arise to the soul. Where the bodily organs are not well attempered and accommodated, the soul is cramped, and cannot duly perform its functions and offices.

It is not fact that souls are now created by God pure and holy; that is, as Adam's soul was created, with

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original righteousness and purity; with a propensity to that which is good, and with power to do it. But they are created with a want of original righteousness and holiness; without a propensity to good, and without power to perform; and a reason will be given presently, why it is so; and why it should be so. And such a creation may be conceived of without any imputation of unrighteousness to God, and without making him the author of sin. God may create a soul in its pure essence, with all its natural powers and properties without any qualities of moral purity or impurity, holiness or unholiness; or that he may create one with a want of righteousness, and with an impotence to good, and without any propensity to it; since by so doing he does not put any sinfulness into the soul, nor any inclination to sin. And that the souls of men should be now so created, it is but just and equitable, as will appear by the following considerations: Adam's original righteousness was not personal, but the righteousness of his nature; he had it not as a private single person, but as a public head, as the root, origin, and parent of mankind; so that had he stood in his integrity, it would have been conveyed to his posterity by natural generation; just as he having sinned, the corruption of nature is entailed upon them. What he had, he had not for himself only, but for his posterity; and what he lost, he lost not for himself only, but for his posterity. So that it was but just that they should be deprived, as he, of the glory of God, that is, of the image of God, which chiefly lay in original righteousness, in an inclination to good, and a power to perform it; and being stripped of this, or being devoid of it, an inclination to sin follows upon it, as soon as it

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offers; and in the room of it unrighteousness and unholiness take place. For, as Austin says, the loss of good takes the name of evil; and this being the case, how easily may it be accounted for, that a soul without any fence or guard, wanting original righteousness, should be gradually mastered and overcome by the corrupt and sensual appetites of the body. A learned author* well observes, "God is to be considered by us, not as a Creator only, but also as a Judge; he is the Creator of the soul, as to its substance; in respect to which it is pure when created. Moreover, God is a Judge, when he creates a soul, as to this circumstance; namely, that not a soul simply is to be created by him; but a soul of one of the sons of Adam. In this respect it is just with him to desert the soul, as to his own image lost in Adam; from which desertion follows a want of original righteousness; from which want original sin itself is propagated."

Should it be said, that though the justice and holiness of God are cleared from all imputation, in this view; yet it does not seem so agreeable to the goodness and kindness of God to create such a soul, and unite it to a body, in the plight and condition before described; since the natural consequence of it seems to be unavoidably the moral pollution of them both—to that may be replied, that God in this proceeds according to the original law of nature, fixed by himself; and which, according to the invariable course of things, appears to be this, with respect to the propagation of mankind: that when matter generated is prepared for the reception

* Sandford or Parker de Descensu Christi ad inferos, l. 3. s. 65. p. 121, 122.

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of the soul, as soon as that preparation is finished, that very instant a soul is created, and ready to be united to it. Now the law for the propagation of mankind by natural generation, was given to Adam in a state of innocence, and as soon as created, *Increase and Multiply.* He after this corrupted and defiled the whole frame of his nature, and that of all his posterity. Is it reasonable now, that because man has departed from his obedience to the law of God, that God should depart from his original law, respecting man's generation? In a case of insanity, which infects a man's blood and family, and becomes a family disorder, God does not depart from the order of things fixed by him; and so in the case of such as are unlawfully begotten in adultery or fornication; when what is generated is fit to receive the soul, there is one prepared and united to it. What if Adam eats the forbidden fruit, and a man drinks water out of another's cistern, stolen waters, which are sweet unto him, and thereby transgresses the law of God; must he forsake his own stated law and order of things? No; nature itself does not so. A man steals a quantity of wheat, and sows it in his field, nature proceeds according to its own laws, fixed by the God of nature; the earth receives the seed, though stolen, into its bosom, cherishes it, and a plentiful crop is produced. And shall nature act its part, and not the God of nature? It is by the just ordination of God, who cannot do an unjust thing, that things are as they are. There is no unrighteousness in God; he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. And here we should rest the subject; in this we should acquiesce; and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

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CHAPTER XII.

ACTUAL SINS AND TRANSGRESSIONS.

From the sin of Adam arises the corruption of nature, with which all mankind, are infected; and from the corruption of nature, or indwelling sin, arise many actual sins and iniquities; which are called in scripture, *The works of the flesh*, (Gal. v. 19,) or corrupt nature, in distinction from the fruits of the Spirit, or inward principles of grace and holiness. These are the same with the *lusts of the flesh*, and *the desires* or *wills of the flesh*. (Eph. ii. 3.) They are the internal sinful actings of the mind and will; even all manner of concupiscence, which lust or corrupt nature works in men, and which war against the soul. They are called *the deeds of the body*, of the body of sin; (Rom. viii. 13, and vi. 6,) and sometimes, *the deeds of the old man*, the old principle of corrupt nature. (Col. iii. 9; Eph. iv. 21.) Again they are represented by *corrupt fruit*, brought forth by a corrupt tree; such is man's sinful heart and nature, and such the acts that spring from it. (Matt. vii. 16—20. and xii. 33.) Those actual sins are the *birth* of corrupt nature. *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.* (James i. 15; see Rom. vii. 5.) Corrupt nature is the fountain, and actual sins, whether internal or external, are the streams that flow from it; *Out of the heart*, as from a fountain, *proceed evil thoughts, &c.* (Matt. xv. 19.) As is the spring, so are the streams; if water at the fountain-head is bitter, so are the streams; *Doth a*

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fountain send forth at the same place, sweet water and bitter?

Actual sins are deviations from the law of God; for *sin is the transgression of the law.* (1 John iii. 4.) Actions, as natural actions, are not sinful. But an action is denominated good or bad, from its agreement or disagreement with the law of God. It is the irregularity, obliquity and aberration of the action from the rule of the divine law, that is sin; and this whether in thought, word or deed; for actual sins are not confined to outward actions, performed by the members of the body, as instruments of unrighteousness; but include the sinful actions of the mind, evil thoughts, carnal desires, the lusts of the heart, *heresies,* errors in the mind, false opinions of things and *envyings.* (Gal. v. 20, 21.) And when we distinguish actual sins from original sin, we do not mean thereby that original sin is not actual. The first sins of Adam and Eve were actual sins, transgressions of the law of God: *Eve was in the transgression;* that is, guilty of an act of transgression; and we read of *Adam's transgression.* (1 Tim. ii. 14; Rom. v. 14.) And original sin, as derived from the sin of our first parents, is also actual; it is a want of conformity to the law of God, and is very active and operative; as it dwells in men, it works in them all manner of concupiscence; it hinders all good, incites to all evil, and is itself exceeding sinful. But actual sins are second acts, that flow from the corruption of nature. Without enlarging on particular sins, actual sins will be briefly treated of in a doctrinal way, classified under their respective heads.

1. With respect to the object of sin, it may be dis-

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tinguished into sins against God; sins against fellow beings, and against ourselves; for which distinction there seems to be some foundation in 1 Sam. ii. 25: *If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?*

Some sins are more immediately and directly against God. All sin, indeed, is ultimately against him. The sins of David against Uriah are confessed by him to be against the Lord: *Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.* (Psalm li. 4.) But there are some sins more particularly pointed at him, committed against him, in an open, bold and audacious manner: *Their tongues and their doings are against the Lord.* (Isa. iii. 8.) Such are they as Eliphaz describes, who *stretch out their hands against God*, (Job xv. 25, 26,) their carnal minds being enmity against God. Particularly sins against the first table of the law, are sins against God; such as *atheism* in theory and in practice; which is, a denying that there is a God, and strikes at His very Being; blasphemy of his name, perfections, and providences; idolatry having other gods before him, and serving the creature besides the Creator; to which may be added sensuality, voluptuousness, making the belly a god, and covetousness, which is idolatry; taking the name of God in vain, using it on trifling occasions, and in a light and irreverent manner; cursing fellow creatures in the name of God, and swearing falsely by it, which is perjury; want of love to God, and of fear of him; having no regard to his worship, private and public; a profanation of the day of worship, and a neglect of the ordinances of divine service.

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Sins against others, are the violations of the second table of the law; as a disobedience to parents; to which head may be reduced, disobedience to all superiors, the king as the father of his country, magistrates. Murder, or the taking away of the life of another, which is the first actual sin we read of after the sin of our first parents. It seems as if the sin of murder greatly abounded in the old world, since at the beginning of the new, a special law respecting it was made; *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.* (Gen. ix. 6.) All sins of unchastity, in thoughts, and by obscene words and filthy actions, are violations of the seventh command, which forbids adultery, fornication, incest, and all unnatural lusts. Taking away a man's property, privately or publicly, by force or fraud, by false accusations, and by circumventing and overreaching in trade and business, are breaches of the eighth command.

3. There are sins against a man's self; the apostle reckons fornication as sinning *against* a man's *own body*, (1 Cor. vi. 18,) whatever pollutes brings dishonor upon it, fills it with nauseous diseases, and weakens its strength. Drunkenness is another sin against a man's self; it deprives him of the exercise of his reason, impairs his health, wastes his time, his substance, and at last his body. Suicide is a sin against a first principle of nature, self preservation. The Stoics applaud it as an *heroic* action; but it is a base, mean, and cowardly one; and betrays want of fortitude of mind to bear up under adversity. However, no man has a right to dispose of his own life; God is the giver, or rather lender, of it, and he only has a right to take it away.

2. With respect to the subject of sin, it may be dis-

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tinguished into internal and external; sins of heart, lip and life; or of thought, word and action. Internal sins are sins of the heart. The plague of sin begins there! That is its seat; it is desperately wicked, it is wickedness itself; and out of it all manner of sin flows. Errors in the mind, false opinions contrary to the word of God; all unreasonable doubts, even in saints themselves; and all the actings of unbelief, which proceed from an evil heart, come under this distinction.

Sins of the lip, or of words, which are external, openly pronounced, whether respecting God or man, and one another; as all blasphemy of God, evil speaking of men, cursing and swearing, lying one to another; all obscene and unchaste words, every sort of corrupt communication; all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking; all foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient; yea, every idle word, comes into the account of sin, and will be brought to judgment. (Eph. iv. 25, 29, 31, and v. 4; Matt. xii. 36, 37.) Also outward actions of the life and conversation; a vain conversation, a course of sin, the garment spotted with the flesh, right eye and right hand sins, and all that the members of the body are used as instruments in the commission of.

3. With respect to the parts of sin; they may be divided into sins of omission and sins of commission. The words of Christ give foundation to such a distinction, (Matt. xxiii. 23, and xxv. 42—44,) and it is strongly expressed in Isa. xliv. 22—24. Sins of omission are against affirmative precepts, not doing what is commanded; sins of commission are against negative precepts, doing what is forbidden. (James iv. 17.)

4. Sin may be distinguished by the principle from

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whence it arises. Some sins arise from ignorance, as the princes of the world, that crucified the Lord of life and glory; in the apostle Paul when unregenerate, in persecuting the saints, which he did ignorantly, and in unbelief; and in others who know not their master's will, and so do it not, and yet pass not uncorrected; especially whose ignorance is wilful and affected, who know not, nor will undersand, but reject and despise the means of knowledge, and say to God, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. The sins of others are presumptuous ones, and are done wilfully, knowingly and of choice, and such are worthy of many stripes. (Luke xii. 47, 48.) Some sins are through infirmity of the flesh, the power of Satan's temptations, and the snares of the world, into which men are betrayed through the deceitfulness of sin, and are overtaken and overpowered unawares, which is oftentimes the case of the people of God.

5. Sins may be distinguished by degrees into lesser and greater; for all sins are not equal, as the Stoics say;* and some are more aggravated than others, with respect to their objects; as sins against God are greater than those against men; violations of the first table of the law, greater than of the second. And with respect to persons who commit them, and with respect to time and place when and where they are committed, with other circumstances—some are like motes in the eye, others as beams. Our Lord has taught us this distinction, not only in Matt. vii. 3, 4, 5, but when he says, *He that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater sin.* (John xix. 14.) And this appears from the different degrees of

* Laert. l. 7. Vita Zeno, p. 510.

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pur.shment of sin, which are allotted, in proportion; as our Lord speaks of some cities, where his doctrines were taught, and his miracles wrought without their repentance, of which he says, that it would be *more tolerable for Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, than for* them. (Matt. xi. 20—24.) According to the laws of Draco, all sins were equal, and all were punished with the same capital punishment; the stealing of an apple, as the murder of a man. Hence it was said, that Draco wrote his laws, not in ink, but in blood.* Not such are the laws of God; nor such the nature of sin according to them.

6. Sins may be distinguished by their adjuncts. As, 1. Into secret and open sins. Secret sins are such as are secretly committed, or sins of the heart; which none but God, and a man's own soul, are privy to; and some pass through it unnoticed and unobserved by the good man himself; and are opposed to presumptuous sins, which distinction may be observed in Psalm xix. 12, 13. Others are done openly, publicly, before the sun, and in sight of all, without fear or shame. Some mens' sins go beforehand to judgment; notorious and condemned by all, before the judgment comes; and others more secretly committed, follow after; for all will be brought into judgment. (1 Tim. v. 24; Eccles. xii. 14.)—— 2. The papists distinguish sin into venial and mortal; which cannot be admitted without a limitation or restriction; for though all sins, excepting one, are venial or pardonable, through the grace of God and blood of Christ, yet none are pardonable in their own nature; or so small and trifling as to be deserving only of some lesser chastisement than death; for all sin is mor-

* Plutarch in Solon. p. 87.

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tal, and deserving of death. *The wages of sin*, of any and every sin, without distinction of greater and lesser *is death*, eternal death, as it must be; for *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things*, be they greater or lesser, *written in the book of the law to do them:* if, therefore, every breach of the law subjects to the curse of it, which is death, then every sin is mortal. Yet,——3. Sin may be distinguished into remissible and irremissible. All the sins of God's people are remissible, and are actually remitted. God forgives them all their iniquities, and heals all their diseases, their spiritual maladies. And on the other hand, all the sins of reprobates—of abandoned sinners—who live and die in final impenitence and unbelief, are irremissible: *He that made them will not have mercy on them*, to forgive their sins; *And he that formed them will show them no favor* in that way. (Isa. xxvii. 11.) There is one sin which is commonly called, the *unpardonable sin*, which is the sin, or blasphemy, against the Holy Ghost; and of which it is expressly said, that *it shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.* (Matt. xii. 31, 32.) But not every sin against the Holy Ghost is here designed. Every sin committed against God is committed against the Holy Ghost, as well as against the Father and the Son; he, with them, being the one God, against whom all sin was committed. Nor is it a denial of his deity, and of his personality which though sins against him, yet arise from ignorance of him, and are errors in judgment; which persons may be recovered from, repent of, and renounce. Nor is a denial of the necessity of the operations of his grace on the souls of men—in order to their regeneration, conversion and sanctification—this sin,

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for the same reasons. Men may grieve the holy Spirit by their sins; yea, vex him, as did the Israelites; and yet not sin the unpardonable sin: yea, a man may break all the Ten Commandments, and not sin against the Holy Ghost. It is a sin not against the law, but against the Gospel. It lies in the denial of the great and fundamental truth of the Gospel, salvation by Jesus Christ, in all its branches; peace and pardon by his blood, atonement by his sacrifice, and justification by his righteousness; and this after having received the knowledge of this truth, under the illuminations, convictions, and demonstrations of the Spirit of God; and yet, through the instigation of Satan, and the wickedness of the heart, knowingly, and wilfully, and maliciously denying this truth, and obstinately persisting therein. So that such an one never comes to repentance—he has no forgiveness here nor hereafter. Not that the holy Spirit is superior to the other divine Persons; nor through any deficiency in the grace of God, or blood of Christ; but through the nature of the sin, which is diametrically opposite to the way of salvation, pardon, atonement and justification; for these being denied to be by Christ, there can be no pardon. Another Jesus will never be sent, another Saviour will never be given; there will be no more shedding of blood, no more sacrifice for sin; nor another righteousness wrought out and brought in. And, therefore, there remains nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and indignation, to come upon such persons.

From so small a beginning as the sin of our first parents might seem to be, what great things have arisen! What a root of bitterness was that which has brought

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forth so much unwholesome and pernicious fruit, sins so enormous, so vast in number! What virtue must there be in the blood of Christ, to cleanse from such sins, and in his sacrifice to make atonement for them; and in his righteousness to justify from them! And how great is the superabounding grace of God; that where sin has thus abounded, grace should much more abound!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

As to the punishment of original sin on those who, it may be thought, not to have added to it any actual sin and transgression, as infants, dying in infancy, little will here be offered. Not that we doubt the right of justice to punish that sin on Adam's descendants, who have not actually sinned after the similitude of his transgression; since corporal death, a part of the punishment threatened, does pass upon them, and they are born with a want of original righteousness, a considerable branch of moral death. But if divine justice proceeds further, and inflicts eternal death, or everlasting punishment on them, we think it must be in a more mild and gentle manner than what is inflicted on those who have also been guilty of actual sins and transgressions. Many unguarded expressions have been dropped, concerning the punishment of such infants, as before mentioned, which are not at all to the credit of truth. Many conjectures have been made, and schemes formed, that are scarcely worth mentioning.

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Some have fancied that all such infants are lost; which seems to have something in it shocking, especially to parents. And others think they are all saved, through the electing grace of God, the redeeming blood of Christ, and the regeneration of the blessed Spirit, to which I am much rather inclined, than to the former: but think it best to leave it among the secret things that belong to God; who, we may be assured, cannot do an unjust thing, nor do any injury to any of his creatures: and who, as he is just in his nature, is merciful in Christ.

This article has no reference to men as elect or non-elect; but as they are all the fallen race of Adam. The elect, as considered in Christ, the Head of the covenant of grace, are not subject, or liable to any punishment, here or hereafter; *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* Their afflictions are not punishments for sin; nor is corporal death inflicted on them as a penal evil. But the present view is of men considered in Adam, as the head of the covenant of works and the representative of all mankind.

Punishment of sin, original and actual, may be considered as temporal and eternal; both in this life, and that which is to come. There is an everlasting punishment into which the wicked go after death; and there is a punishment in this life; *Wherefore should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin?*

I. *Temporal Punishment.*

This is both inward and outward, or of soul and body Punishment inward, or of the soul, is inflicted by the loss of the image of God. All have sinned and *come short,* or *are deprived of the glory of God;* that is of the

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image of God, one principal part of which was righteousness and holiness. And again, in the loss of the freedom of will, and of power to do good. Man has not lost the natural liberty of his will to things natural; but the moral liberty of his will to things moral; his will is not free to that which is good, but only to that which is evil; and that liberty is no other than bondage. Man's free will is a slave to his lusts; he is a home-born slave. Man has lost his power to do good; how to perform that he knows not; through the weakness of the flesh, or corrupt nature, he cannot do what the law requires. In divine things his understanding is darkened—he is darkness itself; he has lost his knowledge by sinning, instead of gaining more; *There is none that understandeth*, and seeks after God, and the knowledge of him. Spiritual things men cannot discern; to do good they have no knowledge; they know not, nor will they understand. And many through a habitual course of sinning, become hardened; and God gives them up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; to vile affections, and a reprobate mind, to do things not convenient; to strong delusions, to believe a lie; and to their own hearts lusts—than which nothing worse can well befal them.

There is a loss of communion with God. Adam sinned, and was driven out of paradise, was deprived of Communion with God through the creatures; and all his sons are alienated from a life of fellowship with him. Their sins separate between God and them; and, indeed, what communion can there be between light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness? In being destitute of hope, and subject to horror and black despair. The

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sinful soul of man is hopeless and helpless: men live without real hope of future happiness, and without God in the world. If their consciences are not lulled asleep, they are continually accusing of sin; the arrows of the Almighty stick in them; and his terrors set themselves in array against them. Having no view of pardon, peace and righteousness by another, there is nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment.

Outward punishments relating to the outward things of life, or of the body, are as follows:

Loss of immortality of the body. Adam's body was gifted with immortality; but sinning, he was stripped of it and became mortal, with all his posterity; which arises not from the constitution of their nature, and the appointment of God, barely, but from sin. To one cured of a disease Christ said: *Go home, sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee*, (John v. 14,) signifying, that his former disease came upon him for sin, and a worse would, should he continue in it.

Labor of body, with toil, fatigue, and weariness, is another penal effect of sin. Though Adam dressed the garden of Eden, in his state of innocence, it was done without toil and fatigue; but when he had sinned the earth was cursed for his sake, and brought forth thorns and thistles; and he was doomed to labor in it, to dig in it, and thereby to get and eat his bread in sorrow, and in the sweat of his brow. And this doom continues still in his posterity; man is born to *labor* as the sparks fly upward; for so the word may be rendered. (Job. v. 7.) The earth remains in a state which requires cultivation, ploughing, sowing, weeding, &c. Men must work with their own hands, in a toilsome and laborious manner,

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to get bread for themselves and families, and have wherewith to give to others. And it may be observed, that the punishment pronounced on Eve, that her conception and sorrow should be multiplied; and that in sorrow she should bring forth children, is continued in her daughters. Of all the creatures, it is said none bring forth their young in so much pain as woman; and hence some of the greatest calamities and distresses in life, are described and expressed by the pains of a woman in travail. (Gen. iii. 16—19.) Loss of dominion over the creatures is another sort of punishment of sin. Adam had a grant of dominion over all the creatures, and these were in subjection to him. But by sin man has lost his power over them; and many of them, instead of fearing and serving him, rebel against him, and are hurtful to him; yea, the noisome beast is one of God's sore judgments with which he threatens to punish sinful men. (Hos. ii. 18; Ezek. xiv. 21.) The many distresses in person, in family, and in estate, are the penal effects of sin. The curses of the law, for the transgressions of the same come upon men, and on what they have; in the city, and in the field; in basket, and in store; in the fruit of their body, and of their land.

Public calamities are to be considered in this light; as the drowning of the old world, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, the captivities of the Jews, the destruction of other nations and cities, the devastations made by wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, &c.

Finally, as to outward temporal punishment, corporal death, which is the disunion of soul and body, is the just *wages* and demerit of sin. It came upon Adam, and it comes upon all his posterity; and sin is its cause. *The*

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sting of death is sin; sin gives it its destructive power and force, and makes it a penal evil.

II. *Eternal Punishment.*

This takes place in part on wicked men as soon as soul and body are separated. Their souls, during their separate state, until the resurrection, are in a state of punishment. The wicked rich man when he died, *in hell lifted up his eyes, being in torment.* At the resurrection the bodies of wicked men will come forth from their graves, to the resurrection of damnation; when soul and body will be destroyed in hell, and punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of God. (John v. 29; Matt. x. 28; 2 Thes. i. 9.) This punishment will lie in an eternal separation from God; but such will have their eternal abode with devils and damned spirits; and in an everlasting sense of the wrath of God, which will be poured forth like fire. (Matt. xxv. 41.) Now this punishment is eternal. It is called everlasting punishment; everlasting destruction; everlasting fire; fire that is not quenched, the smoke of which ascends for ever and ever. (Matt. xxv. 41, 46; 2 Thess. i. 9; Mark ix. 42; Rev. xiv. 11.) The reasons of the eternal duration of punishment for sin, are because it is committed against an infinate and eternal Being, and is objectively infinite, and requires infinite satisfaction, which a finite creature cannot give; and this not being given, punishment must proceed on *ad infinitum*, and so be eternal. Could satisfaction be made, punishment would cease; but no satisfaction can be made in hell by the sufferings of finite creatures; which, therefore, must be continued untill the uttermost farthing is paid, or full satisfaction made, which can never

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be done. Besides, the wicked in the future state, will always continue sinning, and be more and more outrageous and desperate in their blasphemy and hatred of God; and, therefore, as they will sin continually, it will be just that they be punished continually; to which may be added, that there will be no repentance for sin there, no pardon, no change of state; *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.* (Rev. xxii. 11.)

This punishment of sin, both temporal and eternal, is due to all the fallen race of Adam; without any distinction or exception, as they are considered in him, and transgressors of the righteous law of God. The whole world is become guilty before God; which guilt in his sight, and as pronounced by him according to his law, is an obligation to punishment. All the transgressors of the law, as all men are stand cursed and condemned by it; nay, *by the offence of one*, of the one man Adam, *judgment came upon all men to condemnation;* so that all Adam's posterity are under a sentence of condemnation; and as considered in him, and in themselves, are subject, exposed, and liable to the above punishment; being all *by nature the children of wrath.* This punishment, to which all are subject, is not inflicted on some, is because of the suretyship engagements of Christ for them, and his performance of those engagements; whereby he endured all that wrath and punishment due to their sins in their room and stead; and so delivered them from it; *the dawn of which distinguishing grace another volume will open and display.*

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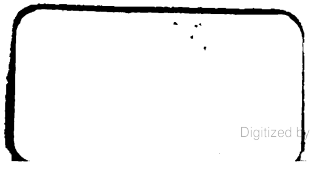
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